

THE ROLE OF THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR
IN THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT

by

Richard Crawford Lief

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Richard Crawford Lief,
has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Faculty Committee

1. *James D. Haggler*
 2. *James D. Haggler*

April 4, 1979
Date

Joseph C. Haughe
Dean

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ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR IN THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT

This In-Service Doctor of Ministry Professional Project Paper includes a descriptive summary of the Cursillo Movement by an Episcopal priest Diocesan Spiritual Director. The nature of the movement, its philosophy and vision, its history, and its format and structure are all detailed, including a basic outline of Pre-Cursillo, the Cursillo weekend, and Post-Cursillo. The Cursillo weekend is primarily described as a launching device towards Christianizing human environments. Excesses and misuses of the Movement are corrected by attending to the method and goal of Cursillo.

The role of the Spiritual Director is formed out of the basic understanding that the Movement is rooted within the structure of the Church and a diocesan plan. This role is also viewed in terms of the Cursillo method and goal. Humility before God and His people is the Spiritual Director's greatest strength. The interdependence of the clergy and laity is noted throughout.

Above and beyond all else, a Spiritual Director of the Cursillo Movement is called to proclaim and live the Grace of God in his own life. He is called to let God's loving power shine through his own weakness. As Christ was broken for all humankind, so must the brokenness of the Spiritual Director be a sign of God's great love which is graciously shared with all people.

INTRODUCTION

A. What is the Cursillo Movement?

The Cursillo Movement, which began in the Roman Catholic Church in Spain in the 1940's, is an instrument of renewal of the church and a method for Christianizing human environments. It is active in a growing number of Episcopal dioceses in the United States and throughout the world.

The primary thrust of the movement is revitalization of Christian living through effective evangelization. This movement includes several steps:

1. Pre-Cursillo: In which candidates are sponsored and prepared to participate in a Cursillo weekend.
2. Cursillo: A 3-day weekend which is an intense course in the essentials of Christian living.
3. Post-Cursillo: In which those who participate in a Cursillo weekend find a support community, which helps them to continue growing and to be effective in the renewal of their environments.

The Cursillo weekend is a community experience. The candidates learn by living and sharing together as concerned Christians for three days (usually Thursday night to Sunday night). A progressive series of talks is presented and discussed.

Each Cursillo weekend has a volunteer team of lay leaders and priest spiritual directors. The talks are presented by both.

The sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Reconciliation are offered, as well as time for personal prayer, reflection, and spiritual direction.

Usually there are separate Cursillos for men and women.

The spirit of the Cursillo Movement is that of the Early Church:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' instruction and the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers.¹

B. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this professional project paper is to explore the role of the Spiritual Director within the Cursillo Movement. More specifically, this paper is intended to increase the writer's knowledge and effectiveness as the Diocesan Spiritual Director of the Episcopal Cursillos in Christianity in the Diocese of San Diego, California.

The nature of the movement, its history, present structure, and major thrusts will be discussed. Current and basic issues, including excesses and misuses, are also areas for discussion.

Historically speaking, this renewal movement had its origins as a lay concern for the youth of Spain. But in its dealings with the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the movement has taken on a more "priestly" orientation with the laity being seen as an extension of the ordained ministry. This issue still exists today but is resolvable in the eyes of this writer through the concept of shared ministry--i.e., clergy and laity seeing themselves working together as instruments for the movement of God in people's lives.

What is the role of the priest in this movement? What is the priest's "ground of being?" How can he or she be a spiritual aid in

¹Acts 2:42.

leading others to effective leadership within the Body of Christ--and more particularly in the "environments" with which each layperson is in contact and part of?

The paper will show that the most effective priest is the priest who incarnates the life of the Grace of God in his or her ministry and life. Each spiritual director is a broken vessel, but it is that very brokenness which God uses to manifest his grace found in Jesus Christ.

In producing this paper, the writer is expressing his personal pilgrimage from a basically humanistic understanding and practice of the Christian faith to a more humble stance of knowing that the power to live fully and in service to others stems from the action of Almighty God in his life, and in the lives of others.

Popular speaker and writer, Henri J. M. Nouwen, who is on the faculty at Yale Divinity School, states that

The great vocation of the minister is to continuously make connections between the human story and the divine story...By connecting the human story with the story of the suffering servant, we rescue our history from its fatalistic chain and allow our time to be converted from chronos to kairos, from organized incidents and accidents into a constant opportunity to explore God's work in our lives.²

The Spiritual Director, together with the lay leaders, promotes the movement of chronos to kairos before, during, and after the Cursillo three-day weekend. The Cursillo, as a method among other methods of renewal in the Christian Church, is for the great majority of the people who have experienced it, a new dimension in living--a transformation.

²Henri M. Nouwen, The Living Reminder (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), pp. 24-25.

Wounded lives have the possibility of broader scope and freedom with God centered at the core of their existence.

C. The Method

The basic method of this professional project has been one of becoming more fully aware of the content of the body of literature distributed through "Ultreya Publications" in Dallas, Texas. Most Cursillo publications are published by Roman Catholic sources. Other books have been consulted concerning the role of the priest, some basic treatises on spirituality, and other publications relating to experiential religion.

The writer has also interviewed a number of other spiritual directors, both Roman and Anglican, and has formed clusters of ideas and directions from these interviews. In addition, lay leaders have been consulted in the same fashion for balance.

This paper is not an exhaustive review of the literature, and the interviews reflect a selective group of people. The intent of this project is to convey a sense of "being" which a spiritual director must have in order to carry out his/her calling in this role. This is a beginning--the method of continuous discovery and growth is the underlying method as the writer continues to serve as priest, believer, and human being.

D. Writer's experience with the Movement

After listening to some of the cassette material provided by the National Cursillo Center (Roman Catholic) I am assured that my less than

spectacular beginnings in this movement are not unusual. A number of leaders, initially, have had "negative" experiences at the three-day weekend. It was difficult for me to see how people's lives were being changed--moved out of the randomness of living just for themselves and for their purposes alone--into the experience that God has his own purposes which he wishes to carry out through us. But there was a new dimension in living for many people who had experienced the weekend, one that they never imagined to be true. This dimension was transforming their wounded lives into lives of glorious possibility and freedom, with God centered in the core of their existence.

I was first introduced to the Cursillo Movement in 1975 through the influence of Jim and Margaret England of St. David's Episcopal Parish, San Diego, California, where I presently serve as Rector. At that time the Englands had been serving in the parish as lay readers and had reached a lull in their commitment. The parish had recently experienced a trauma of reorganization after having confronted some old and new issues at the time of moving from mission to parish status. Jim and Margaret, remaining loyal, but tired, were looking for a fresh and revitalizing experience in their lives and in the life of the church. They felt "at a low ebb." The parish was now stable and "moving" once again, but something more was needed. Another couple, Les and Liz Sadler, who had attended St. David's for a while, and who were now attending another church, introduced the Englands to Cursillo. They sponsored the Englands to a Roman Catholic Cursillo in early 1975.

The Englands came back from their Cursillo weekend changed persons. Jim stated that he now believed in the Resurrection of

Christ. This astounded me, for he had based much of his theology on his understanding on a number of modern theologians, who did not stress this point. Something definitely had happened to this man. He said, "Dick, I want you to go on this weekend, but it is going to take some time." At that time, only the Roman Catholic Movement existed in San Diego, and there was a long waiting list for Protestants. Clergy, however, had a better chance of being accepted sooner since they were seen as potential catalysts in encouraging the movement in parishes.

I was very reluctant. I was concerned that I was getting into something that I knew very little about, and I did not want to become involved with any movements. I had had experiences with others, and felt that I was compelled to do things and think things that the movement wanted and thought, not what I wanted and thought.

But Jim and Margaret were my good friends. They were parish leaders. Further, this movement sounded like something that would continue to upbuild and stabilize the parish.

Jim and Margaret began to express interest in the parish once again and their outlook seemed "a complete turnabout." Indeed, something had happened to these two persons--but what? I was relieved, insulted, aggravated, scared, and expectant all at once.

My wife and I decided to let our names be submitted on an application for a Cursillo weekend. Jim and Margaret agreed to sponsor us. We were accepted as candidates on the Roman Catholic Cursillos of numbers 70 and 71 in San Diego for October 1975.

However, my streak of resistance continued. Jim told me that I

would not be able to wear my watch.³ I said to myself, "now they will really have me in a box--I'm trapped for the weekend." I wondered how I could get out of it. The watch became a symbol of my resistance. Finally, however, I was able to bring myself to put it in my suitcase and never look at it again for the whole weekend.

Attending the weekend with me was another Episcopal priest whom I had known in other situations and with whom I had continued a friendship. He and I quickly rekindled our friendship and began to have conversations together after each talk presented on the weekend by the team of leaders. These conversations centered around the "naive presentations" and the "poor theology" of the talks and the over-zealousness" of the team. We were not going to be "railroaded" into anything! Looking back on the weekend, I was alternately impressed with some of the material presented and amused with the other parts.

These conversations relieved the tension I felt being in a strange place with strange people who did some "Catholic" things that I really did not want to do. I did not want to be drawn into this different group of people who seemed to be wanting "to force some things down my throat," or so I felt. However, there were some significantly positive events which were happening for me as well.

At the reading of the story of the Prodigal Son from the Gospel of St. Luke, I began to review some of the significant events in my life. But do you express your thoughts and feelings to others when you

³Candidates are asked to leave their watches at home so that they may not have to concern themselves with time.

are trying to put up a wall around yourself so that you will not be touched? No.

I followed the thread of most of the talks, but fell asleep during some of them. But I was particularly impressed with the Sacraments talk given by the Spiritual Director, Fr. Bernie Cassidy, who happened also to be the Cursillo Spiritual Director for the Catholic Diocese of San Diego. The closing talk given by the lay rector of the weekend was a simple and touching witness of his work with Christ.

One morning, the candidates were awakened to the sound of guitar music and singing, many people hugging and kissing us saying "happy birthday." I enjoyed all the attention and the love shared by people who did not even know me or the other candidates. A number of other special and positive surprises made up the weekend which at once impressed and made me more of a skeptic. Accepting a person with love does not necessarily encourage that person to turn to God. But the love that was expressed by most people indicated that there was something of great significance on this weekend.

On the way home, down from the "mountain-top experience," I expressed quite strongly to Jim and another cursillista (one who has attended a Cursillo weekend) that I was not going to become a member of any new movement, that I had enough to handle at the church without having to spend a lot of time doing this sort of thing. Jim was already talking about other members of the church going on Cursillo and how excited he was that this was happening. He was pleased that this Rector had made "his Cursillo." I was pulled in many directions and just decided to keep quiet.

When I walked in the door of our home and saw my wife whose Cursillo would be coming up in two weeks, I instantly began to consolidate some of the experience I had had on the weekend. The love of the people on the weekend and the love I share with my wife began to make sense to me. I saw the love of Christ in both.

Yes, some of the talks could have been improved upon and some of the more zealous people on the team could have been less zealous. What really touched me and made me stop, think and reflect on the weekend was the love of God (Grace) which I did encounter through the love expressed by the people involved. How could this apply to the parish situation? How could this apply to my ministry? Indeed, how could this be applied to my life? The grace of God mediated from one person to another breaks down the greatest of walls and allows a new freedom for the person being given such love.

Approximately fifty people from St. David's Parish eventually became actively involved in the Cursillo Movement. During 1975-1978 there were ten Anglican weekends in the San Diego area. This aspect of the movement will be covered more fully in the historical section of this paper.

I have been involved in all but two of the ten San Diego Cursillo weekends which have taken place at this writing. The Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese has attended and given his approval for the formation of a Secretariat (Board of Directors) of Cursillo. Both my wife and I serve on this board. In 1978 the bishop appointed me Spiritual Director for the Cursillo Movement of the diocese.

Through my own experience with the movement I have made a few steps towards realizing the great love of God that is at work in our lives through what is known as progressive conversion. It is not just an experience of loving people on a particular weekend that makes up the major thrust of Cursillo. The main purpose, as we progressively become more conformed to Christ and we are simultaneously freed to be our unique selves, is to Christianize the world--to change the human environments in which we live by offering the love of Christ to others. This takes the simplest of forms but requires commitment to the cause of Christ.

As Spiritual Director, and as a person, I need to recognize, receive, and respond to the self-emptying love of God. This paper will seek to activate me, and others, in this work.⁴

⁴The author wishes to note that the use of the pronouns "he", "him" or "his" refers to both men and women.

CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHY AND VISION OF THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT

A. Program of evangelization

The Cursillo has a goal--to change the world, to remake the world in Christ, to restore all things to Christ. And the Cursillo has a strategy, the strategy of structuring Christian life, of providing a backbone for Christian life in every environment. The full scope of the Cursillo Movement cannot be understood unless the goal and the strategy are understood.¹

At its best, Cursillo should seek to put itself out of business when its strategy fulfills its goal.

There is an evangelical call directed to men and women who are natural leaders. The evangelization that is to take place does not relate to the concept of "making a decision for Christ" in front of 16,000 people, such as may be experienced at a Billy Graham rally. Rather, the evangelization is to take place with lukewarm, nominal, or even drop-out Christians who have the potential for leadership in their environments. Preferably, those of the pre-Cursillo committee, which is the selection committee made up of priests and laypeople, look for candidates to attend the weekend who already exhibit leadership. The committee is charged to accept candidates who influence people in some way. These potential candidates may or may not be attending church at the time of their selection.

¹Al Blatnik, Your Fourth Day (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1973), p. 7.

In fact, it is the people of God who are in need of evangelization, of healing, of knowing once again, or maybe even for the first time the power of God's grace in their lives through His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Juan Capo Bosch states

The most serious difficulties exist right in the midst of the people of God. There is disunity and antagonism in the Church. There is a lack of that full vitality which nourishes in the faithful the joy of being a Christian, of taking part with conviction in the life and mission of the Church in our times, plagued with such great spiritual and social problems ... our urgent task then is to renew the entire Christian community, to restore the significance of the people of God.²

We could equate the word "transformation" with the word "evangelization." Men and women in the Cursillo Movement are called by Christ to enter into the fullness of their baptism. They are called to radiate the joy and the vitality of living in God's Grace to others in their several environments--work, play, family, friends, etc. Transformed people seek to transform others.

From its very beginning, the Cursillo Movement has been involved with an evangelical thrust. This thrust is mainly operative within the Church, rather than without. In 1948, a great pilgrimage to the Shrine of St. James in Spain was conducted for 700,000 Roman Catholic young men. This was a significant step in the beginning of the Cursillo Movement. The pilgrimage was intended as a means by which young men could renew their faith. The Cursillo weekend developed as a result of small preparatory groups meeting before the pilgrimage and

²Juan Capo Bosch, Lower Your Nets (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1969), p. 23.

group reunions gathering afterwards.

The Cursillo method of evangelization is not merely self-serving to those who attend the weekend and become a part of group reunion as a result; it is not a mass movement to convert great crowds; it is not a program of social action, although its fruits may lead to an awakened and enlivened social conscience. Rather the Cursillo is meant to transform individuals, in all their uniqueness and naturalness and sense of leadership, into evangelists for Christ. This sense of converting individuals is captured in the following delightful story:

At the end of a school term a boy was traveling in a railway compartment with his father, who had not gotten over his annoyance with his son's failure in geography. The boy kept harranging his father with questions, giving him no peace to read his newspaper. Noticing a full-page advertisement featuring a map of the world, the father tore it into a hundred small pieces and promised his son five dollars if he succeeded in putting it back together again perfectly, hoping to gain at least a quarter hour's peace and quiet.

But the boy who had failed geography put the map back together again without flaw in little more than a minute. The father, surprised and amazed, could not understand how he could have done it. The boy, smiling, disclosed the secret: "I didn't remake the map, dad; what I did was to put together a figure of a man in a tailor's advertisement on the other side of the map. It was much easier to remake the man and in that way to remake the world."³

B. To awaken the hunger for God

The Cursillo Movement has long recognized, long before the reforms in the Roman Catholic Church which issued forth from Vatican II, the crisis in spirituality which the world finds itself in today. The hunger within the human breast is to know and live with God. This

³Ibid., pp. 21-22.

Augustinian point is the touchstone of all of the Cursillo weekends and the follow-up methods. People do have a hunger and a thirst for God which like the woman in the St. John's story of the Woman at the Well, can only be satisfied by "living water" which is known to us as the Grace of God. A key point of Cursillo is that this hunger is satisfied by the Grace of God.

The opening meditation given by a priest on the weekend is entitled "Who am I?" or "Know Yourself," the specific title differs from region to region, but the content is essentially the same. In this meditation, the candidates hear that there is a sense of lostness known by people in the modern world and that the unexamined life is devoid of meaning. But the priest assures the candidates that they have time to reflect on their lives on the weekend.

The stations of the Cross or the Passion Story are then dramatized to give a sense of God's offering to humankind and the usual rejection of what he has to offer.

The third part of the opening presentation on a Cursillo weekend concludes with the reading of the prodigal son story with a commentary again by one of the priests. The atmosphere created by this sequence of events is meant to help the candidate "get in touch" with that hunger for God without which he has little or no meaning.

The enemy is meaninglessness, or lack of life in the Church and its members. In contrast, the early Christians "as a community ... were alive, enthusiastic, confident. They knew that God was with them, and they knew that he was doing great things for them ... and because they

knew the importance of Christ and of what he had done, they were determined to spread the message to make everyone Christian."⁴

Secularism is also seen as a distraction from "getting in touch" with the hunger for God. Secularism defines Christianity as irrelevant to modern life. "Instead of reforming the world according to the Christian message, the world is reforming the Christians according to its own desires."⁵

The candidates are not asked to deny what is authentically human in themselves, but rather to reorient it.⁶

In reorienting their lives, they discover the hunger and the need for God that was there all the time. Eduardo Bonnín relates this experience and discovery in this way:

What more would you discover? The joyful surprise of an unconquerable need, of a deep hunger for the spiritual, even among those from whom you would least expect it. From worldlings, from unbelievers who can hide or smother, with noisy distractions, the sufferings of a possible flight from themselves and the pain of dissatisfaction.⁷

To fill the hungry with good things, the Cursillo mentality conveys the following conceptions and attitudes:

1. A jubilant and triumphant concept of Christianity.

i.e. Christ really is the Lord of THIS world, that without Him, nothing good can come, and that with faith in Him all things are possible...(we are to) expect that Christ will transform the world then if only they make themselves available to Him to work in faith for Him.⁸

⁴Stephen B. Clark, The Work of the Cursillos and the Work of Renewal (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1967), pp. 2-3.

⁵Ibid., p. 4. ⁶Bosch, p. 25.

⁷Eduardo Bonnín, How and Why (Phoenix: Ultreya Publications, 1966), p. 29.

⁸Stephen B. Clark and Ralph C. Martin, The Cursillo Method: The Purpose of the Movement (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1974), p. 35.

2. A dynamic vision of apostolic Catholicism [for Anglicans, a dynamic vision of Christianity] i.e. beyond interia, Christ's call to apostolate as a necessity.
3. Apostolic restlessness or dissatisfaction, i.e. not satisfied with anything less than the full reign of God on earth ... a restlessness that comes from being filled with the love of Christ.
4. A profound and accurate knowledge of modern man. i.e. sharing their life and speaking their words so that the mentality of modern man is natural and instinctive in the apostle. It is only when the mentality of modern man is natural and instinctive that it can be deeply Christianized.⁹
5. A conviction of the inadequacy (or wrong use) of many of the methods used in the Christian apostolate ... determined to search out the Christian tradition and the modern world and even heaven itself to find a channel that is adequate to bring the divine force in Christian life to bear on modern man.
6. A conviction that all men can be brought to Christ ... results even in the most unlikely quarters among the most hardened people.
7. The conviction that the solution is simple, and because it is simple, it is universal. Christ is the answer, and His life can be lived by all men everywhere in every situation.¹⁰

The essence of Cursillo is that there is a method by which all people can live the fundamentals of the Christian life together. "so that souls, by their own spiritual force of gravity, might keep on structuring Christianity with the richness and vigor of primitive Christianity."¹¹

"The Cursillos are not an old spirituality, nor any one type of

⁹Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 37

¹¹The Essential Principles (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1968), p. 1.

spirituality, but rather a channel to make all different types possible; to awaken the hunger for God in all souls."¹²

C. A movement within the Church

We have already quoted Bosch before on the necessity of restoring the Church itself; that it is in dire need of renewal; that it needs to capture the vitality and joy of early Christianity. The Cursillos seek to be a part of this renewal.

There is a certain tendency to think that renewal means doing away with certain things. "The work of cursillos is a work of renewal in the sense of revitalization. It does not involve any pruning."¹³ There is a great deal of emphasis placed on the relating of Cursillo back to the church. The church is seen as the mainstay out of which the church-sponsored Cursillos have the authority to operate and have meaning. Juan Hervas' writings from Ciudad Real in particular, after he was transferred from Mallorca, are a beautiful defense of how the Cursillo movement fits into the aims and directions of the Church. However, one might wonder how much spontaneity is lost by having to relate the movement to the structures within the Church. It is for this reason that a few of the lay leaders of the movement would like to see as little involvement of the diocese as possible.

In San Diego, and in other areas of the country, the local diocesan Bishop's backing and support has provided for the movement

¹²Ibid.

¹³Clark, p. 5.

a stability and an authority which it would never have on its own. Other dioceses seem to lose much of their momentum and spiritual power as a result of not wishing to have themselves attached to diocesan structure.

D. The Pivotal Concept of the "Grace of God"

Within the Church the constant and most urgent issue is that Christians live in Grace, and that a life in Grace is the ideal, the great ideal held up to all within the Church. No Christian should look upon the life of Grace as just another in human life, much less should he view it as something of less importance than the other elements of his life ... Consequently, the heart and essence of the Cursillos in Christianity is to bring home to Christians a realization of what constitutes the life of Grace and its wonders... and the purpose of Cursillos in Christianity is that those who make the Cursillo continue to make the life of Grace the center of their lives, their ideal.¹⁴

From this pivotal point of the "life in Grace," we can trace all of the other components of the Cursillos: its material and spiritual preparation; its candidates; its professors; the spiritual director; the technique; the meditations and talks; the follow-up program or fourth day.¹⁵

The second talk or "rollo" on the Cursillo weekend is entitled "Habitual Grace" or simply "Grace." The focus of this talk given by a priest is that God is continually pouring out his love to all persons, whether they deserve it or not. The question for the weekend candidate is whether or not he will accept. What is called for is a faith response. As one accepts in faith the "wonderful Grace of God," he is

¹⁴Alphonsus M. Duran, The Essence and Purpose (Phoenix: Ultreya Publications, 1966), p. 11.

¹⁵Ibid, pp. 11-12.

he is transformed; life is viewed now through the eyes of a loving creator God.

The piety of Grace ... is joyful and is based on happy and filial relations with God, considered as Father. The piety of the Commandments lives in constant fear of committing sin. In the first, man is a son, in the second, a servant. The first focuses Christianity more positively: the happiness of finding oneself in God's Grace, the happiness of heaven, the communion of saints, the Mystical Body of the Church, and even sorrow itself transfigured in Christ. The second is a negative orientation.¹⁶

The Cursillo weekend is the beginning of a joyous encounter with Christ, and an unconditional surrender to Him and to His cause. "It is the discovery of the enormous fortune in the world; Sanctifying Grace, sharing of divine life in man."¹⁷ Through the talks, Christian folk songs, prayer, sharing of concern in various forms, liturgy, and even jokes, the Grace of God is evident throughout the weekend. "In Cursillos, the truth is conveyed so that entering through the head, it explodes in the heart."¹⁸

Consequently, the Cursillo method aims everything to achieve a personal encounter with the living God, the giver of all Grace. That Grace comes through a person's everyday life. As one author describes the process: "We are not concerned with an apostolate of pure and disincarnated transcendence, but one which draws its source from the grace in order to transform life."¹⁹

¹⁶Juan Hervas, Questions and Problems Concerning Cursillos in Christianity (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1966), p. 48.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁸Juan Capo, The Basic Concepts of the Cursillo Movement in the light of Vatican II (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1968), p. 21.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 47.

The Cursillo is based on the reality of the man of today, in order that, transforming him and having him determine to live as an authentic Christian founded on the life of Grace, in intimate and personal friendship with Christ, he should "be on fire" that others live it and transform the world with their example, their words and their actions.²⁰

E. Promotion of Christian Leaders in order to change Environments

... that the world is not lost because there are many pagans, but because there are few Christians who live and act as Christians.²¹

The Movement of the Cursillos in Christianity aims and seeks as authentic incarnation of the gospel in the real life of men and society; it does not however, seek this incarnation directly, but by means of the men it prepares and nurtures.²²

The transformation of environments by men and women who are living what is fundamental to being a Christian is the ultimate objective of Cursillo. We are not talking here about social action, but about bringing people within environments, through the care of leaders who have been on a Cursillo weekend, to a friendship with Christ. Through this process, a basically non-Christian world is transformed into a Christian world.

Cursillo seeks to accomplish this by selecting natural leaders in all aspects of the social environment and bringing them to a fuller understanding of their relationship with Christ, the Church, and their apostolate in the world.²³ Leaders are needed "who exercise a significant influence on the environment, or who have a significant role in decision-making..."²⁴

²⁰Hervas, pp. 59-60.

²¹Hervas, p. 62.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Bosch, p. 24.

²²Blatnik, p. 39.

The Cursillo seeks leaders not to take them out of their natural environments but to make them aware of the possibilities that they have to introduce others to Christ within these environments. Cursillo does not ask that a Cursillo leader suddenly change his personality and manner and begin proclaiming Christ from a soapbox; but that by word and example, influence others.²⁵

In the fifth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, Jesus calls His followers to be "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." They are called to transform the world by word and example. Salt that loses its flavor is no longer of any use and should be thrown into the streets. But the disciples are called to be the salt that gives flavor to life, not only preserves life as it does meat, but gives zest to life. That zest is Christ.

The disciples are called not to hide their light under a bushel, but to let it shine. That light is Jesus Christ Himself. Cursillo leaders are called to bring zest to life, and to let the light of Christ shine in their environments so that in turn people in those environments become friends with Christ.

The true Christianization of the environment [is] first to transform the individual members and afterwards to place them so that in a wise and diligent use of their talents, they apply themselves effectively to the transformation of their world. All this is called "Christian backbone making" in the environment.²⁶

Ultreya is the name of the national Roman Catholic magazine which is published monthly in Dallas, Texas. A dramatic, yet

²⁵Blatnik, p. 40.

²⁶Bosch, p. 21.

illustrative true story, was published in Ultreya relating the process which is described above.²⁷

The story unfolds as follows: A Dr. Richard Frattianne, director of the Burn Center at Cleveland Metro-General Hospital, and associate professor of surgery, is the hero. He wanted to change the environment of patients and staff in the center into a "Christian Community," one in which the patients could be recreated into wholeness. Badly burned patients have scars and physical impairment that will last all their lives. The doctor's patients begin to feel like monsters, to lose their self-identity, their personhood, their self-respect. They did not feel like people anymore. More than physical healing was needed.

Dr. Frattianne realized that the patients needed divine Christian love, agape. He began to search the hospital for people who had the capacity to love in this way. He looked for people with idealism, self-surrender, and charity. He recruited Christians from many denominations, Jewish people, and agnostics.

Some of these people went to Cursillo and afterward formed a group reunion, which is part of the Cursillo follow-up program. They invited others to pray with them. As a result of the doctor's efforts and the group prayers and activities with the patients, the environment gradually changed, and the team recruited changed into a team of loving, caring, sensitive people who now practice wholistic medicine. They treat the whole person. The results have been amazing, for not only does this team pray for and work with the patients, but the patients pray for the team.

²⁷"Environmental Groups," Ultreya, VI,9 (May 1978), 5.

In the same issue of Ultreya there is a short form which can be used as a guide to changing environments. There are three headings:

1. Myself - Do I offer my daily work to God? Do I occasionally take a moment for silent prayer? Do I ask God's help in my work or business dealings? Are my fellow workers aware that I am Christian by my actions? Do I display real Christian joy on my job--even at difficult times?

2. Others - Am I truly concerned for the spiritual welfare of my fellow-workers? Do I try to know and understand them? Do I help them (out of love) when they need help? Do I listen to them? Do I communicate my Christian beliefs and values to them? Do I share my Christianity with other Christians at work?

3. Environment - Is my work environment conducive to a Christian life? If it is not conducive, why is it not? Does my presence at work improve the overall environment? Do I promote Christian values? Do I speak up against dishonest practices or non-Christian attitudes? Have I formed an apostolic team with Christian fellow-workers? Is my work environment, however slowly, becoming more Christian because I am a part of it? Am I an effective leaven?²⁸

The Cursillo is looking for natural leaders in natural environments, those environments which already exist. These leaders in turn, after attending the weekend, are to transform their environments for Christ. These leaders become the backbone of the environments in which they live. The backbone of Christian life is nothing other than to have

²⁸"Evangelizing my work environment," Ultreya, VI,9
(May 1978), 4.

the resources of human life placed at the service of the divine "so that Christ's ideal may penetrate society and His truth and His law renew and remake it completely."²⁹

What the Cursillo means by apostolic action is the making of a definite attempt to bring people into friendship with Christ. Cursillo provides a basis for all charitable action and all social action.

... really Christian acts, flow from the life of grace. Service can be done in a way to help bring people to Christ, but it will not be done that way unless the people are a part of a living Christian community that makes them realize that they should be witnessing to Christ and helping others to become His friends.³⁰

F. The Lay Emphasis

Eduardo Bonnín, a lay leader in Catholic Action, was one of the founding fathers of the Cursillo Movement. Catholic Action itself was a lay movement originally authorized by the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

There is no way in which the work of Cursillo is going to be accomplished without the work of the laity. The lay apostolate is integral to the plan of action which has been described above. Lay people are the persons involved in ninety-nine percent of everyday environments.

The urgent work of the present moment is, therefore, to teach Christians [laity] to live their Christianity integrally, making of it a positive splendid, fascinating ideal, worth the hardship of fighting for and living: a Christianity which would be a life of limitless charity, a profound love of God in every action, and a holiness within the reach of all.³¹

²⁹Bosch, pp. 20-21.

³⁰Clark, p. 28.

³¹Hervas, pp. 57-58.

The Cursillos have always defended the following points:

1. The layperson is an apostle by the very essence of his Christian vocation.
2. This apostolate must be accomplished outward from within. The layperson must be like yeast in the dough.
3. "Building up Christianity" implies the infusion of the Christian spirit into existing lay structures.
4. "The Cursillo does not promote apostolic individualism; while it provides fully for the inherent need for association required for all apostolic effectiveness ..." ³²

And further,

The permanent task of the layman will continue to be the infusion of Christianity into life, through the encounter and personal friendship with God and in communion with his brothers ... he continually tries to remake the world according to God's plan and design. ³³

Laypersons form the directing part of the Cursillo weekends themselves and also serve and direct the work of local Secretariat (Board of Directors). The priests serve as spiritual advisors and liaison persons from the Bishop. Chapter 4 will describe this more fully.

Laymen in the Cursillo play a very important part with the testimony of their lives and of their talks they give twice as many as the priests on the weekend. What would be taken from a priest as the mere fulfillment of his duties may be accepted with less reluctance from a layman. ³⁴

We are made members of the Body of Christ and members of the royal priesthood of all believers at our baptism. "Christianity is

³²Capo, p. 24.

³³Ibid, p. 45.

³⁴Duran, p. 15.

confectured in baptism; what we are striving for is the awareness of and the full living out of this baptism."³⁵ We become aware of the life of grace God is calling each person to as we begin to understand the meaning of our baptism. The laity, indeed all baptized persons, enter into a ministry at the point of their baptism. The Cursillo continuously emphasizes this point.

G. Christian Fundamentals for Christian Living

Cursillo calls for people to live what is fundamental for being a Christian, to live this way in their environments, thereby transforming the world, accomplishing this as a Christian community.

What is fundamental for being a Christian in the eyes of the Cursillo movement is to live a life of grace. The summary of the law is the key to the life of grace. We are to love God and love our fellow human beings. "Everything else becomes inconsistent and artificial when one holds up this reality, this one fact, the main reason and the only motive that can hold together and make solid what is fundamental for being a Christian."³⁶

Again, baptism is emphasized. As the light of baptism glows brighter and brighter, it defines, sparks, and strengthens the personal vocation of each particular Christian.³⁷

"Living what is fundamental for being Christian provides

³⁵Capo, 41.

³⁶Explanation and Purpose (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1968), p. 11.

³⁷Ibid.

backbone for Christian living; the forming of this backbone at the same time enables people to live what is fundamental for being Christian."³⁸ This is a familiar way in which the Cursillo literature describes the lay apostolate--it is the way the founders of the movement conceived it.

Understanding the concept of backbone means that Christian life is meant to be structured. This idea comes from St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (4:12), in which he speaks of building up the body of Christ. The founders were concerned with building up Christian communities which were apostolic, outgoing, desirous to bring all people to Christ.³⁹ This was not meant only to build up the church, but to penetrate into every situation in life.⁴⁰ "The life of the body of Christ has to be lived everywhere, day in and day out ... every group of men should form a Christian community."⁴¹

A human body depends on the skeleton for its shape. The skeleton gives it certain form and strength. Without the skeleton, a human body would just be a blob of flesh, incapable of acting. Moreover what holds a skeleton together is the backbone. It is only when there are vertebrae which are linked together to form a backbone that a human body can stand and move and be effective.⁴²

The Cursillo founders saw the need of a backbone in every community, a Christian backbone. The backbone would be made up of strong Christian leaders who could lead others to Christ, help them keep alive in Christ, and give them direction."⁴³

Four basic ideas underlie the structuring of Christian life.

1. The environment is very important, for people do not live by themselves. "What they are is determined by the people they associate with."⁴⁴

³⁸Clark, p. 42. ³⁹Ibid. ⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 42-43. ⁴¹Ibid., p. 43.
⁴²Ibid. ⁴³Ibid. ⁴⁴Ibid., p. 44.

2. Living with Christ is the basis for all of life.
3. The backbone must work with the vertebrae in order to complete the process of Christianizing the environment.
4. A person who is trying to transform his own environment through Christ, has to be a part of another environment, i.e., a Christian community.⁴⁵

The Cursillos do not aim at increasing the number of devout Christians, nor do they aim at converting unbelievers or the weak minded or saving lost souls, nor do they aim at creating new organizations.⁴⁶

The goal is not to have everyone be a cursillista.

The standard of judgement for a Cursillo Movement is, simply, to what extent are the various environments in the city being Christianized, being transformed in Christ? To what extent is Christian life being structured? To what extent are there active Christian leaders in many environments who are actually working to draw men to Christ and to form Christian life among them? If a Cursillo Movement is not doing this, it may be doing something good, but it is not successful as a Cursillo Movement.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 45.

⁴⁶Eduardo Bonnin, The How and the Why (Phoenix: Ultreya Publications, 1966), p. 37

⁴⁷Clark and Martin, p. 50.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT

A. From Mallorca, Spain, to a Global Encounter

1. Origin of the Movement. The content of this chapter is to give a basic outline of the history of the Cursillo Movement from its beginning in Mallorca, Spain, up through its span of influence today which is on a global scale. The word "encounter" is meant to mean "an encouraging face to face meeting with another person or group of persons." An "encounter" with Christ includes both judgement and mercy, and the beginning of a new life based on the bountiful Grace of God.

The effective Spiritual Director should have the basic outline of the history of the Cursillo Movement in mind. This is needful because without a knowledge of history we do not know where we have come from, nor where we are going. The priest, as well as others in the movement, is apt to lose the perspective of the meaning of the movement as it was originally intended by the founding fathers. A knowledge of history gives one the ability to stand outside of oneself in order to look at a situation; as for example, the issue of clergy and lay roles within the movement.

It is helpful to know that the founding fathers, in the earliest stages of the movement, were laymen. A lay pilgrimage and a call for the activation of the lay apostolate by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church were two of the prime motivating factors which led to the formation of short courses in Christianity and group

reunions later to be called the Cursillo Movement.

"The precise date of the 'first' Cursillo de Cristiandad (Cursillo in Christianity) is still a matter of controversy."¹ The difficulty seems to center in the fact the Cursillo Movement came out of a long development of events, and as in any movement, one cannot pinpoint every detail which emerged along the way. Various meetings and training courses took place in preparation for a large pilgrimage which will be described later. Some claim that the pilgrimage leadership meetings constituted the beginning of Cursillo. Sequi and Fernandez, two early leaders of the movement, say that Cursillos began on the fifth meeting of pilgrim leaders.² "Eduardo Bonnin," the most prominent lay leader, "claims that the Cursillo exercise, as we know it today, took shape between the years of 1944 and 1946."³ "Juan Capo a priest who joined the movement in its early stages claims that the first Cursillo de Cristiandad took place on January 7-10, 1949."⁴

According to Ivan Rohloff the 1949 date is considered by most to be the actual beginning date. There is a plaque at the entrance to the Monastery of San Honorato, on the island of Mallorca, Spain, where the January weekend occurred commemorating the first Cursillo stating that the monastery was the site. But Rohloff says that it was probably the seventh Cursillo.⁵

¹Ivan J. Rohloff, The Origins and Development of Cursillo (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1976), p. 48.

²Ibid. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid., p. 50.

Similar to every human action, the Cursillo Movement did not come from a vacuum, but from a long, previous period of gestation.⁶ As the Cursillo method developed, various 'evolutions' took place in order to make it more 'effective.' New lands and new people bring different adaptations required by differing needs.⁷ In addition, we can trace various stages in the development of the movement. Finally, if one is to have an adequate grasp of Cursillo, one must understand its essence and purpose. This was discussed in Chapter 2.

The history of the Cursillo Movement parallels the history of Spain. Francisco Franco (1891-1975) was able to form a dictatorship after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). His dictatorship was an attempt to unify the country. The Roman Catholic Church shared the same desire to unify the country--"to rally all sectors of society."⁸

In this desire to rally the country after a period of inner strife, a particular emphasis was placed on youth. The Catholic Action movement was seen as an effective instrument to achieve the goal rallying young people. The Catholic Action movement usually refers to all organized movements of the lay apostolate sanctioned by the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

Originally, a massive youth pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James of Compostela had been planned to take place in 1937. This was

⁶Eduardo Bonnin, How and Why (Phoenix: Ultreya Publications, 1966), p. 20.

⁷Juan Capo, The Basic Concepts of the Cursillo Movement in the light of Vatican II (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1968), p. 9.

⁸Rohloff, p. I.

an early attempt to unify the country, but the Civil War prevented the trip. The Second World War postponed the journey until 1948. It was meant particularly for Catholic young men, and was sponsored by the Young Men's Branch of Catholic Action.⁹ It drew 700,000 youths from all parts of Spain and from other Spanish-speaking nations.¹⁰

In preparation for the Pilgrimage, workshops for pilgrim leaders were developed nationally and adapted locally on the diocesan and parochial levels. Since Spain has had a strong history of spreading its influence throughout the world, these workshops centered around a team of people who shared their lives and learned how to work together to make apostolic renewal possible.¹¹ The Pilgrimage was meant to bring about apostolic renewal.

Cursillos in Christianity (Cursillos de Cristiandad) were born out of these workshops and their adaptation. Eduardo Bonnín's leadership was the most influential among the founders in the development of the movement.¹² But,

Serious historical study of the movement has been delayed because the most valuable historical evidence has to be obtained from the archives of Eduardo Bonnín, whose account of the history is not accepted by the National Cursillo office of Spain. He does not feel that he enjoys the freedom to write the real history of the movement but he is very concerned that it be done.¹³

Other publications stress that Bishop Juan Hervas, who became Bishop of Mallorca (Majorca) in 1943, began the movement. The approach of this literature is exemplified by the following quotation:

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 59.

¹¹Stephen B. Clark, Desarrollo (Dallas: National Cursillo Center, 1971), p. 9.

¹²Rohloff, p. III.

¹³Ibid., p. IV.

He [Hervas] had been struggling for years with the problem of the Church's communication with the modern world. He had noticed, even as a young boy, how much the church seemed to be out of contact with the people of Spain of his day, and he spent much of his life studying and teaching pastoral methods, in an effort to overcome the problem. When he became Bishop of Mallorca, he instituted a broad pastoral plan to renew the whole life of the Church in his diocese. He intended to use the best modern methods available in the attempt to make Christian life thrive in his diocese.¹⁴

Preparation for the pilgrimage, coupled with Bishop Hervas' concern helped propel the beginnings of an influential world-wide movement.

As part of the preparation, five Cursillos were held from 1942-1946, according to Bonnin.¹⁵ He describes these meetings as follows:

In these one could observe, as already present, that the luminous content of Christianity was captured in all its fullness and intensity by those living on the edge, not only of Catholic Action, but also of religion. In a few days these men were inflamed and filled with Christ. In all this there was no doubt that God was putting an inexhaustible source of apostolate before the consideration of the directors of the Mallorcan Juventud de accion Catolica.¹⁶

2. Mallorcan Stage. The Diocese of Mallorca sponsored several hundred young men which, with their experience in the

¹⁴Stephen B. Clark and Ralph C. Martin, The Cursillo Method: The Purpose of the Movement (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1974), p. 26. Author's amplification - Out of a dubious beginning between Church and State, God has fashioned something for His use and Glory. For whatever purposes humankind designs something, God will use it and make it work to His Glory. The sense of restlessness which the Catholic Action Movement had in promoting the great pilgrimage, was a prompting from God. Bishop Hervas' dream was a prompting from God as well.

¹⁵Bonnin, p. 21.

¹⁶Ibid.

preparation times, and the actual pilgrimage, provided an atmosphere for the "first" Cursillo in January, 1949.

Bishop Hervas in hearing about this Cursillo remarked:

In hearing what I have heard about your Cursillo, I would say that in the magnificent pilgrimage to Santiago, you stole the Apostle's (St. James) sword. With it you have pierced a hole in heaven's and through this hole come torrents of divine Grace flowing over youth.¹⁷

Bonnin points out that the new Cursillo format and course did not continue to use the earlier courses provided in preparation for the pilgrimage.¹⁸ More formation of a basic organization was done.

In 1953, Cursillos were given in Columbia and on the Spanish mainland. Mallorca, where the Cursillo had its beginnings, remained the locus point for its development for many years and became the center of the movement. It is a special island with two main characteristics. The first is that its people have a deep sense of prayer and contemplation which is said to be induced by the many high mountain tops. The second is the strong missionary and apostolic spirit of the island people.

The great Franciscan missionary to the New World, Junipero Serra, is a native son along with many of the Franciscans who followed him to evangelize the lands beyond the Sea. For deeply embedded in the Spanish mentality is the "mas alla," the "ultreya," that is "ever onward."¹⁹

The importance of these and other themes which the writer has mentioned will take on greater importance in the ensuing chapters of this paper. Suffice it to say that the great pilgrimage set the tone of the future movement.

¹⁷Ibid. ¹⁸Ibid., p. 23. ¹⁹Rohloff, p. 23.

The spirit of pilgrimage is a spirit of restlessness, a spirit of dissatisfaction with spiritual lukewarmness, a spirit of brotherhood, of the brotherhood among fellow pilgrims who are striving together to reach the goal. The pilgrim style is the style that has marked so much of the spirituality of Cursillo.²⁰

After the great pilgrimage, the Cursillo meetings no longer had the need to meet to prepare to go to a shrine. Rather, they were recast in the light of the theme that men were being trained for the pilgrim Church. The January weekend began the emphasis on a closing exercise which "was like the joyful reunion at the end of pilgrimage and a foretaste of the ultimate union of the militant and triumphant Church in Paradise."²¹

This exercise indicates an essential shift in emphasis. "In fact during this period of the movement there is a striking contrast between the academic and scholastic tone of the doctrine talks and vivencial and existential tone of the lay talks."²²

Due to a number of factors including difference in approach, a sense of exclusiveness on both sides, Cursillo and Catholic Action split in November of 1954.²³ Diocesan Cursillo Secretariats were established. Bishop Hervas of Mallorca tried to mend the break, but the gap between the two organizations grew wider all over Spain.

²⁰Clark and Martin, p. 6. ²¹Rohloff, p. 60.

²²Ibid., p. 63.

²³The major factors were: Youths being brought who were not part of Catholic Action; some people signing up for Catholic Action but concentrating their efforts on Cursillo; the Catholic Action magazine PROA becoming solely a Cursillo organ; Catholic Action being seen as one more environment that could be renewed by the work of Cursillo.

The removal of Cursillo from Catholic Action was a traumatic experience for the latter since it deprived it of most of its energetic leaders and took away most of its life. Much resentment and bitterness arose among those who remained loyal to Catholic Action. Mallorcan Catholic Action has never since recaptured the strength it had before the establishment of the Diocesan Secretariat of the Cursillos.²⁴

Clark mentions that the Cursillo Movement was "too major a thing for it."²⁵ He says that key problem probably was the taking of people into Cursillo who were not Catholic Action members. The cursillistas could expect them to be apostles, but not Catholic Action members.²⁶

The process of separation was accelerated when the question arose of a Cursillo for men. The Men's Branch of Catholic Action was unwilling to have the Young Men's Branch cross into its own jurisdiction and put on Cursillos for older men.²⁷

This jurisdictional dispute hastened the formation of a diocesan Cursillo secretariat and thus the ushering in of a separate Cursillo organization.

In 1955, the main outlines of the Cursillo Movement were a matter of form, even though there have been some modifications and enrichments since that time.²⁸ This concludes the Mallorcan period of Cursillo development. We now move to what is known as the Ciudad Real stage.

3. The Ciudad Real Stage. The background to the Ciudad Real period must include a statement about Bishop Hervas. From the time he became Bishop of the Diocese of Mallorca, he showed a keen interest in the Cursillos for the pilgrim leaders. He was a powerful leader in

²⁴Rohloff, p. 74.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁵Clark, p. 18.

²⁸Ibid., p. 20.

²⁶Ibid., p. 19.

the Catholic Action movement, but his enthusiasm turned more toward Cursillo once he saw the power of the movement. He had seen the movement have large effect in Spain, in various other European countries, and in South America, particularly Colombia. He had seen Cursillos now open up for women. He had seen the separation between Catholic Action and Cursillo.

Cursillo grew quickly during the forties and fifties and received so much publicity that opposition naturally welled up against it. Tension continued between Cursillo and Catholic Action. Some of the criticism was well-founded and necessary. Some of it was mistaken due to a poor understanding of the movement and the newness of it, which was very threatening. Much of the opposition was over incidentals.²⁹

Hervas had willingly put his prestige on the line in favor of Cursillos. Bartolome Torres, rector of the seminary of Mallorca, was a friend of Franco, and an enemy of Cursillo. Since Torres spoke so vehemently against Cursillo, and so openly, Hervas had him removed from the seminary. Torres, in turn, used his influence to have Hervas removed as Bishop. Jesus Enciso y Viana, a personal friend of Torres, was made Bishop of Mallorca. Hervas was transferred to Ciudad Real. The year was 1955.³⁰

The movement in Mallorca had to operate underground. Ciudad Real, based on the original work in Mallorca, became the model for Cursillo. It exercised a stabilizing influence on the Movement.³¹

He [Hervas] added two new elements to the method, namely the diocesan and parochial plan and the movement of priests in connection with Cursillo. He changed the ultreya making it more formative and less kerymatic. In doing so he gave the movement more solid footing in the Church at the price of putting it under greater control of the clergy.³²

²⁹Rohloff, p. 85. ³⁰Ibid., p. 86. ³¹Clark, p. 22.
³²Rohloff, p. 89.

Meanwhile, on Mallorca, Enciso was doing what one would expect. He recognized the good of the Cursillos, but said that they needed to be supplemented by the various organizations of Catholic Action. "He urged all the cursillistas to join Catholic Action to assure greater perseverance."³³

Bishop Hervas did not abandon the Catholic Action Movement upon "being transferred" to Ciudad Real. He was a strong supporter of both Catholic Action and Cursillo. He was an even stronger supporter of the parish and the diocese, i.e., the regular institutions of the church. When he moved to Ciudad Real, he integrated the Cursillo movement as closely as possible to the life of the Church, making use of it as an instrument of renewal for the whole Church.³⁴ Hervas' work was one of statesmanship--integrating the Cursillo movement into the life of the Church and of gaining acceptance for it.

In closing our remarks on this period, Rohloff states that Hervas' concept of pastoral planning did not recognize the role of laymen in establishing the plan--it was something simply for them to carry out. In order to make the Cursillo more acceptable to the Spanish episcopacy, he placed it under the auspices of the Men's Branch of Catholic Action, thereby severely limiting young people's participation. He also excluded women at this time.³⁵ Two significant pieces of Cursillo literature were published in Spanish at this time--the Pastoral Letter (a theology of the Cursillo) and the Leader's Manual (which was used as the basis of starting the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego's Cursillo Movement).

³³Ibid., p. 91. ³⁴Clark, p. 29. ³⁵Rohloff, p. 88.

4. Internationalization stage. The Ciudad Real period of the Cursillo history covers 1955-1962.³⁶ It not only includes events in Ciudad Real but covers a period of great expansion of the Cursillo Movement all over the world. October 1955 was the date of a Cursillo held in the Spanish College in Rome. Cursillos were held not only in Spain, but in Portugal, Austria, Germany, and France. In Africa, the movement entered Spanish Guinea. It came to the United States in 1957 through the influence of two Spanish air cadets training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. It came to Mexico in 1958. The first national secretariats were established in Mexico in 1960, and in Venezuela in 1961. San Angelo, Texas, was the site of the first English speaking Cursillo in 1961. The movement spread to other Latin-American countries--Colombia, Peru, Cuba, Bolivia, Uruguay, Argentina, Ecuador, Puerto Rico and Chile. In America, we find the Cursillo being initiated in Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Michigan, Missouri and Ohio, with both Spanish and English Cursillos.

During this period there was no one place or person who was looked to for leadership. It is no wonder that many different versions of the original Cursillo began to appear. "Mexico and Venezuela were already exerting influence on the international scene since they had their own national secretariats. The Spaniards became painfully aware of their own need for a national secretariat if any kind of synthesis of the movement were to be achieved."³⁷

It is quite natural then that Rohloff and Clark call this

³⁶According to Rohloff. Clark says 1955-1960.

³⁷Rohloff, p. 103.

period of the development of Cursillo, the Spanish National Secretariat Period. Stephen Clark prefers the dates of 1960 to 1966 for this period, concluding with a separate category for the international period. Ivan Rohloff includes the dates 1962-1973. At any rate, the influence of the Spanish Secretariat is central. This was also a time of a growing body of Cursillo literature and national and international meetings or "encounters" of Cursillo leaders. Although opinions varied outside of the official thoughts of the secretariat, "it was a period of great creativity and growth for the movement, especially in the area of self-awareness, but at the same time Cursillo became more closely tied to the parish and other Church structures and moved away from its lay origins."³⁸

The synthesis which the Spanish National Secretariat attempted was only partial, because it was only one national secretariat on the world scene. Even though national meetings of leaders established community, they were more successful at clarifying Cursillo than they were at thrusting it into the modern world.

Cursillo writers of this period were an effective means of bringing the movement to maturity. Juan Hervas, Juan Capo and Eduardo Bonnin were the three individuals who, though very different from one another, influenced the development of the movement during this stage. Bishop Enciso's influence on the development of Cursillo ended with his death in 1962. He left no writings to further his views. Bonnin

³⁸Ibid., p. 105.

wrote the least, but had the greatest influence.³⁹ It is interesting to note the ebb and flow of the need to have a rallying point and some uniformity, and yet the need for creativity, and the need for a reasonable balance between these two polarities.

Stephen Clark describes the latter part of the Spanish Secretariat period as the Postconciliar Period 1966--the present. Obviously, great changes were taking place in the Roman Catholic Church as a result of the Second Vatican Council 1962-1965. This had its effect on the Cursillo Movement. Reaction to the changes made Cursillo suspect in some quarters, and in other quarters people affirmed the movement as complimentary to the resolutions of the council. It also must be noted that Pope Paul VI named St. Paul as the patron saint of the Cursillo Movement in 1963, and the First World Ultreya in Rome convened in 1966. Both these events indicate the acceptance of the movement during this time.

As concerns the movement in the United States, we again mention the date of 1957 as the first Spanish speaking Cursillo. "The English-speaking movement began towards the end of 1961 in a small town in the Texas desert--San Angelo, Texas."⁴⁰ The Cursillo grew like "wildfire" through all parts of the United States.

The first Anglican Cursillo weekend held in the United States was in Texas in the early 1960's.

The first Cursillo in California was held in Stockton. The first English language Cursillo in California was held in San Francisco

³⁹Ibid., pp. 119-120.

⁴⁰Clark, p. 61.

in 1962. Shortly thereafter St. Benedicts (center in San Francisco) was selected as a permanent Cursillo center, with Fr. John Hester as the priest director. The first non-Roman Catholic to make Cursillo in the San Francisco area was Fr. David Crump of St. Jude's Episcopal Church in Cupertino in 1964.⁴¹

At the present time, Cursillos for many denominations are being held at St. Benedicts. Roman, Anglican, Lutheran, and inter-denominational organizations sponsor Cursillos around the country. With the approval of the two local bishops in Los Angeles (both Roman and Episcopal) in October, 1972, the first Anglican Cursillo was held in Los Angeles. The end of 1978 will see the Episcopal Diocese having sponsored forty Cursillo weekends. With the assistance of the Diocese of Los Angeles, and the San Diego Roman diocese, the first San Diego Anglican Cursillos were held at Palomar College, San Marcos, California, in August 1976. The Rt. Rev. Robert M. Wolterstorff, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, was in attendance at that time as a participant. The Episcopal Diocese of San Diego will have held ten Cursillo weekends by the end of 1978.

In October of 1978, delegations representing forty Episcopal dioceses throughout the United States met in Kansas City to initiate the start of National Secretariat for the Episcopal Church of Cursillos in Christianity. An interim committee has been elected by that group to draw up and form a set of guidelines for a national organization. There is much concern that these be merely guidelines and not hard and fast rules. The general thought is to have an equitably funded national communications clearing house with suggested guidelines and

⁴¹History of the Cursillo Movement (San Diego: Cursillos in Christianity of the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, 1978), p. 1.

other common literature published, with the direction of the local Cursillo communities being left in the hands of the local bishop. This author was privileged to be part of this Kansas City meeting. The representatives will again meet in Atlanta in 1979 to formalize a National Secretariat for Anglican Cursillos. Previously, we have been only receiving literature and other information from the Roman Catholic Secretariat and its publishing house, Ultreya Publications, in Dallas, Texas.

B. A Unique, Original, and different response to the needs of the times

The author has sketched a basic outline of the history of the Cursillo movement up to the present. It is not intended to give a full representation of the development but an understanding. In this subsection of the chapter on history, we will attempt to portray the need out of which the Cursillo was born. It was not a unique sense of need, but one which was widespread when admitted. In fact, one could say the Second Vatican Council was convened as a result of the very same need. The common assumptions of the day and the institutions representing them were, and still are to a great extent, confused--they did not "match up" with reality. Church seemed like a bureaucracy and a faceless entity. Governments did what they thought was to their greatest advantage, and the common people were left out of the decision making process. The beginnings of the Cursillo movement parallel the social upheaval that we are still experiencing today. The civil upheaval in Spain prefigured the upheavals which

were to be felt beginning with the end of World War II and which reached a peak in the results of the war in Vietnam. The power and spirit of Christ and His Church were muted in a secular world which did not seem to concern itself with individual spiritual needs.

The story of Juan Hervas characterizes in human form the above statements and their meaning. As a young boy, he wondered why so few people were in church to hear a fine preacher. He also wondered why most of the people were women. The scant audiences would only give passive attention to the shepherd.

In preparing for the priesthood, he discovered, as he worked among young boys, that if "he showed them some love, spoke to them in their own language, and explained things, adapted to their mentality, they left their games and came to listen (to him) with interest."⁴²

Later, as a priest, he came into contact with many different kinds of people. "I got into contact with the present-day world which was hungry for truth and authenticity and could be satisfied only by the great supernatural realities of which the Church is the depository."⁴³

When he became a bishop, his boyhood concerns surfaced once again. He saw that men and youth were little interested in religion. How does one captivate technological man? How does one help him see the supernatural order of things? How does one bring them to feel a

⁴²Juan Hervas, Questions and Problems concerning Cursillo in Christianity (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1966), p. 7.

⁴³Ibid., p. 8.

common responsibility for the destiny and happiness of other men? One day he discovered the existence of Cursillos in Christianity.

An idea had triumphed and, by man's effort and God's grace, a new mentality with an ancient background had been fashioned into a method impressive for its effectiveness and ease of communication.. . A system of action had been discovered, a short cut in the ways of life to facilitate the encounter with Christ, Savior of men, and to begin an intimate friendship with Him ... A large number of men followed the ways of God joyfully, enthusiastically, and with love. The frozen crust of human respect and indifference and even incredulity was smashed to pieces.⁴⁴

It is a question, according to Hervas, not of saving the substance of the faith, but of finding new ways to present it.

Hervas, along with other "founders" of the movement

...saw the collapse of so much of the old and saw the resultant hunger and search on the part of men. Could this, they asked, be the means God is using to bring men to turn to Him? And with faith they saw the same power at their disposal that the early Christians had. And so they dared to say yes, Christianity can be the same today, because of Christ "Who is the same yesterday, today and forever." (Heb. 13:8)⁴⁵

The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement points out that on Cursillos the distorted image of God who is supposedly remote and dead has been replaced by a God who is alive and who is personally and deeply in love with each person from all eternity.⁴⁶ Because God loves each person, He wants the very best for each person. He is also a powerful God. "Only this image of God can fully satisfy our desires."⁴⁷

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Clark and Martin, p. 34.

⁴⁶A book produced as a summary of an international Cursillo meeting in 1974.

⁴⁷The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1974), p. 23.

The Cursillos are the natural, ripe fruit of various tendencies of modern man, his most healthy ones, of course. The Cursillo Movement is a child of its times ... The Cursillos in Christianity were born of the question: "What is Christianity?" And above all, "What do we have in our world and in the Church that is true Christianity?" ... Why don't we have a more living and active Christianity? Why do so many Christians live in mortal sin? Why doesn't youth find the ideals it craves in the Church? Thus the Cursillos appeared in an atmosphere of healthy skepticism and desire for improvement.⁴⁸

The Cursillo weekend and all the follow-up programs attempt to provide a living experience of what is fundamental for being a Christian. "Christianly speaking, all living experience is living experience with others."⁴⁹ What is intended is for the person who experiences a Cursillo weekend and the follow-up, is the personal experience of reality, that is, the personal experience of Gospel lived. Juan Capo is quoted as saying:

It was firm conviction that it is really possible for those who live on the periphery of that which is religious to feel the shattering effect of Grace, and that, no matter how far they were from Christ they were capable of surrendering themselves totally to Him, providing the things which are Christ's and his Church are presented as they really are.⁵⁰

Cursillos concern themselves with stirring up the latent hunger for God in the souls of men and women. It is of the essence of the Cursillo movement to remind people of the Baptismal covenant which they made with God or which was made for them. This needs to be seen as the "greatest dignity to which any person may aspire."⁵¹ Once life

⁴⁸ Alphonsus M. Duran, The Essence and Purpose (Phoenix: Ultreya Publications, 1966), p. 6.

⁴⁹ Eduardo Bonnin et al., Structure of Ideas (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1965), p. 28.

⁵⁰ Capo, p. 17.

⁵¹ Explanation and Purpose (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1968), p. 3.

is seen in this light (of Baptism) then it takes on a new clarity and direction. Cursillos provide what is fundamental for living as a Christian in the light of one's Baptism. As baptised persons, we are called to have an apostolic ministry. This apostolic ministry centers on the urgency that sacred things protect and give life to human ones.⁵²

In concluding this chapter on the history of the Cursillo Movement, the author believes that the originality of power of the Cursillo Movement is due to its roots in ancient Christian community. What is fundamental (its essence) in Christianity was lived in the early beginnings of the Church. Cursillo seeks to revive the early Church experience, to capture the living sense of what Christianity is all about. It is not a door to door evangelism which only works if one can get the person to come to church, and then the person feels involved and is actually accepted into the church community. It is not a mass evangelism appeal such as Billy Graham might provide. In this appeal people are stirred for a while, and when the follow-up team goes home, so do many of the people, especially those who are not Baptists.

The Cursillo provides a living experience with concrete follow-up and direction afterwards, of what it means to be a Christian. It also has a mission to accomplish. It has a challenge to Christianize the world. It provides an on-going means of support in order to accomplish this far-reaching and challenging goal.

⁵²Ibid., p. 5.

Out of the hunger of modern persons and the ineffectiveness of the Church to reach people with her message of hope, of good news in Christ, the Cursillo movement was born. Arising out of a dictatorship, one might well question the origins of the Cursillo Movement. However, the author believes that a good and useful tool of renewal has been fashioned with the help of God. The Cursillo Movement does provide a means by which men and women can progress in their relationship with Christ and in the lay apostolate. The next chapter on the format and the structure of the movement describes the means by which these objectives are accomplished.

CHAPTER IV

FORMAT AND STRUCTURE OF THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT

A. Secretariat

The Secretariat is a local (diocesan) board of directors who guide the Cursillo Movement at the pleasure of the diocesan bishop. In addition, there are national secretariats which act as resource centers for the local secretariats. These groups are not meant to be authoritarian, but resource boards offering guidelines to improve the efficiency of the movement and its method. "As a method, the Cursillo Movement demands only sufficient authority and a minimum organization to achieve its purpose."¹ The secretariat should serve the movement and its members.

The Secretariat can be described as that group of leaders-priests and lay persons who, presented by the Cursillo community, are appointed by the hierarchy in order to orientate, animate and serve the Cursillo Movement, so that it might be all and only that which it ought to be as a method, as a Movement, and as an instrument and concrete part of the diocesan pastoral plan.²

In the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego the lay members of the Secretariat are elected by the Cursillo community, i.e. those who have attended a Cursillo weekend. The clerical members are appointed by the Bishop to serve for approximately two years. The Secretariat sees its authority to operate as coming from the Bishop of the local diocese. Whatever the bishop's pastoral plan is for the diocese, the

¹The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1974), p. 175.

²Ibid., p. 177.

Secretariat is expected to conform within the limits of that plan. However, "this recognition includes the expressed or implicit acceptance of all that the Movement represents as a concrete pastoral plan with its own essence, purpose, methodology and structures."³

The Secretariat is seen as a special group reunion⁴ of those who have learned and experienced the grace of God in their lives. The Secretariat needs to have a true community spirit. It cannot be a place where its members argue over methodology and approach. Legitimate differences may appear in the meetings, but friendship cannot suffer, "nor willingness to come to an agreement; where, once a decision has been reached, all will unconditionally be loyal to carrying out that decision."⁵

Since the Secretariat is in business to serve, it must conserve and invigorate the mentality, purpose and basic methodology which define and characterize the Cursillo Movement. In addition the members of the Secretariat should have a sense of the Church. The Cursillo Movement can never be regarded as an end in itself. It is a part of the Church and can never be nor function as a separate and independent work.

There are further guidelines to which the diocesan secretariat must adhere. It is necessary that they collaborate with other movements and associations. It is necessary that they establish dialogue

³Ibid., p. 178.

⁴A group of friends who meet on a regular basis after having attended a Cursillo weekend for the purpose of practicing the Christian life.

⁵The Fundamental Ideas, p. 178.

with the other movements and associations in order to be a part of the over-all diocesan plan of the bishop.⁶

The proper functions of the Secretariat are as follows:

1. To promote the movement and to maintain ties with a national secretariat so that the local movement is authentic.
2. To oversee the working of a leaders' school which will be described in the next few pages.
3. To give its greatest attention to the school.
4. To promote a concern for an adequate study of the local environments so that the Cursillos may select those that are most important to the diocesan plan and thus fulfill its purpose within the world of today.
5. To plan only for Cursillos whose participants can be assisted in the Post-Cursillo⁷ and carefully select the team for each Cursillo.
6. To promote the campaign for Palanca⁸ as a base for the fruit of Cursillo.⁹

Juan Hervás sees a special mission for the priests on the Secretariat, and a special mission for the laity who are members. He states

This team of priests is responsible for the formative and doctrinal guidance of the Cursillo in Christianity Movement in

⁶Ibid., p. 182.

⁷Post-Cursillo - the activity of Cursillo which takes place after the Cursillo weekend.

⁸Palanca - translated "lever" from the Spanish. Means those acts of sacrifice carried out on behalf of another person to stir that person to experience the love of God.

⁹The Fundamental Ideas, p. 182.

Dioceses. These priests should be, therefore, the guiding brains, the soul and the heart of this whole sanctifying and apostolic undertaking. They should have full knowledge of the Cursillos in Christianity; of their doctrinal content, technique aims, spirit and fruits, feeling for them, moreover, great enthusiasm and love.¹⁰

It is the bishop who appoints the priests, including the Spiritual Director for Cursillos of the Diocese. The priests remain under his charge and are to keep in constant contact with him, on all details, progress, and incidents, doubts and difficulties that arise.¹¹

The lay team of the secretariat carry on the executive management of the Cursillo. Hervas has its leaders appointed by the bishop.¹² In the Diocese of San Diego (Episcopal) the lay members of the secretariat are elected by the Cursillo community.

In the Episcopal San Diego secretariat, the laity have divided up the tasks assigned to them. Various committees such as pre-Cursillo, three-day, post-Cursillo, training, communications, supplies, facilities, and recording secretary are assigned from within the secretariat to lay members. Priests also serve on these committees, but the emphasis is to let the laity take the lead in many matters. The priests on the secretariat see themselves as guides, not dictators.

Eduardo Bonnin et al. state their concept of the duties of the Diocesan Secretariat: It will meet weekly or biweekly; to

¹⁰Juan Hervas, The Leader's Manual for Cursillos in Christianity (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1964), p. 300.

¹¹Ibid., p. 300.

¹²Ibid., p. 303.

prepare for the holding of the next Cursillo, to work out programs for the Leaders' School;¹³ to examine and expedite the progress of Group Reunions, to arrange the program for the next Ultreya¹⁴ and to review the previous one; to select the cursillistas for the coming Cursillo, to fill out and send, each quarter, all communications to the National Secretariat.¹⁵ Again our local secretariat assigns these functions to its various committees. It does not "report" to a national secretariat but exchanges information with a national resource board which is in the process of formation at the time of this writing.

B. Leaders' School

A vital arm of the Secretariat is the Leaders' School. It is a vital arm of any Cursillo Movement in any particular locale. A good leaders' school infuses the primary motive of the movement into the minds and hearts of the cursillistas. The primary motive is Christianizing environments.¹⁶

¹³Leaders' School - a section of this chapter will be devoted to this institution.

¹⁴Ultreya - a weekly or monthly meeting of a community of group reunions.

¹⁵Eduardo Bonnin, et al., Structure of Ideas (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1966), p. 107.

¹⁶In the author's experience, this *modus operandi* is infrequently discussed. Smaller issues and regulatory disputes seem to take up most of the time spent in Secretariat meetings. It is the author's belief that the movement in the San Diego area will lose its vitality and its sense of purpose if it does not put a major part of its effort into a Leaders' School. At the present time, the local secretariat will meet on retreat for the purpose of forming community. We do not seem of one mind and spirit in Christ. The author believes this is because we do not share the same understanding of the motive and reason for being a Cursillo community.

As we mentioned in the chapter on history, the Cursillo Movement was born out of a School of Leaders. These leaders were preparing for the great pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James. In all countries of the world the institution of a Leaders' School has been found to be an essential element for continuity and development.¹⁷

Hervas states that the purpose of the Leaders' School (he calls it the School for Instructors) is the technical preparation of Cursillo leaders and says it embraces a study of the "rollos"¹⁸ and a study of teaching techniques. A second purpose includes the "intensification of spiritual formation and a most careful cultivation of inner life, as the basis for the whole external apostolate."¹⁹

The Leaders' Manual sets up very strict criteria for the selection of leaders in a leaders' school. Leaders are to be "exemplary Catholics," solid and fervent in piety, tested in discipline and obedience, have enthusiasm, capacity for sacrifice and dedication, intellectual and moral capacity, and judicious amount of experience in the Post-Cursillo. The San Diego Episcopal Movement's understanding is that any cursillista who is interested may attend.

Hervas says that the leaders' school is "... an organism so essential to the Movement of Cursillos in Christianity." And further,

There will be an effective movement of the Cursillos in Christianity, if good Leaders' School is had, and if these leaders know the teaching and technique fundamentally and with detail, with a conscientious and deep study of the literature

¹⁷The Fundamental Ideas, p. 185.

¹⁸"rollos" - short talks on the fundamental aspects of Christianity.

¹⁹Hervas, p. 309.

we possess on this movement ... and if there is a continual increase in the idealism, self-surrender and the spirit of charity of those who, by the election of the bishop, have been chosen to be the soul and life of this providential movement.²⁰

Most schools have developed because of the needs they felt they needed to address themselves to. They have followed through with programs that met those needs. "What is necessary and possible in one place might be necessary but not possible in another."²¹

In spite of the diversity of approach, the Third World Encounter (of Cursillos) proposed this following definition: "It is a group of Christians who, united through and in a climate of Group Reunion, seek to be more committed and more united, to accelerate the living of what is fundamental for being a Christian in themselves, in the Cursillo Movement, and in the environment in which they live."²²

The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement book states that the leaders' school should be open to all Christians. It should include special sessions with material of general interest, not just Cursillo material. The school should avoid "elitism." All is to be learned and proclaimed in a spirit of humility, focusing in on the figure of Christ. The School should have common norms, objectives and efforts.²³

The author believes that the leaders' school should center around the thought that there needs to be a clearing house of ideas and a place to build common purpose and direction. The ultreyas may demonstrate common support, but the ideas of the Cursillo Movement

²⁰Juan Hervas, Questions and Problems concerning Cursillos in Christianity (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1966), p. 183.

²¹The Fundamental Ideas, pp. 185-186.

²²Ibid., p. 186.

²³Ibid., p. 190.

need a specific place from which to emanate, a focal center. It is hoped that the formation of a leaders' school in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego will provide such direction.

C. National Secretariat

National secretariats in various countries are intended to be consultive, not controlling. They are to serve as clearing houses for ideas, and for the publication of Cursillo material in a uniform manner, so that all local movements may operate with the same material and a similar understanding, yet always adapting to their particular situations.

The National Secretariat is not, therefore, an organ of national authority to give commands in the diocese, but a minister or servant that helps with the leadership of diocesan bishops, giving them the aid they need, so that the Cursillo movement may better collaborate with their apostolic ministry.²⁴ Hervas states the National Secretariat has the following aims: "to collaborate in the apostolate of the hierarchy; to provide norms and orientation to the movement; service; promotion; co-ordination of diocesan secretariats; and to provide information through a periodical."²⁵

Bonnin, et al., essentially agree with Hervas' statements in terms of function and aim of national secretariats. "At no moment

²⁴Hervas, Questions and Problems, p. 165.

²⁵Ibid., p. 168.

can they be assigned executive functions; they do not control: they enlighten."²⁶

In September of 1978, 40 dioceses of the Episcopal Church met in Kansas City to discuss the possible formation of an Episcopal National Secretariat. The publication of specific Anglican literature on the Cursillo Movement is particularly anticipated. An interim committee of one priest, one layman, one woman from each of the five national regions designated met in 1979 to discuss a proposal for an Episcopal National Secretariat to be formed in Fall 1979 in Atlanta, Georgia. The guidelines proposed are very similar to those of Hervas and Bonnin.

The Episcopal expression of a National Secretariat is also finding helpful material from the Fundamentals of the Cursillo Movement: "The National Secretariat is considered important and almost imperative for guaranteeing the best fruits of the movement in those countries where it has spread and become vigorous."²⁷

D. Pre-Cursillo

Before the Cursillo weekend begins, many months of preparation must take place. The weekend is the pivotal point in the Cursillo renewal method, but it is not its aim. The aim is to "Christianize environments." This term "Christianize environments" will be described in more detail later in the paper.

²⁶Bonnin, et al., p. 114.

²⁷The Fundamental Ideas, p. 183.

The Pre-Cursillo can generally be explained as all the activity that precedes the weekend. Two ingredients may be described:

1. Pre-Cursillo committee.
2. Staff (team) selection and preparation.

The aim of the pre-Cursillo committee, acting as an arm of the local secretariat, is to contact natural leaders in various environments through group reunions and in accordance with the pastoral plan (if there is one) of the diocese. The natural leaders are then encouraged to participate as candidates on a Cursillo weekend. Through post-Cursillo programs, these candidates are supported in changing their natural environments for Christ.

Ideally the Diocesan Secretariat, using the pre-Cursillo committee, with the knowledge and consent of the bishop, study human life in all of its activities in the community and determine that in order for it to be Christianized they need to:

1. Examine the environments and list them in their order of importance. The key ones will always be the ones that influence others;

2. Begin the Cursillo strategy in the key ones by selecting agents of change, and

3. When the key leaders in the environments are found and prepared, then, the pre-Cursillo committee is ready for the three-day weekend.²⁸

²⁸Gerald Hughes, Let's Keep It Simple (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1976), pp. 13-14.

The objective is to have a group of lay apostles living the Christian life and working in their environments, by means of group reunion, whose apostolic plan will transform those environments. The group reunions inform the pre-Cursillo committee by way of application forms submitted by sponsors for candidates, and with the candidates' knowledge and approval.

"The purpose will always be to give Christianity a strong backbone wherever it may be, by means of living and life-giving vertebrae."²⁹ This is done through the process of determining who are the present vertebrae of a particular environment. The present vertebrae are those "who constitute the living nerve of opinion, influence and prestige in it."³⁰ These people are those whose opinions carry weight, and their activities exert influence.

It is not a matter of discrimination against some, but of discerning which people are called by God to a certain role in the Body of Christ. Not everyone is called to do the same thing.

However, the problem still exists in terms of the feeling of discrimination. Why should others go and I can't, say some. The answer given above is not always felt by everyone to be sufficient.

Understanding the method of the movement answers this problem. The method can best be learned by the community level in the Leaders' School which at its best would be open to all cursillistas.

In a distorted sense, the method which depends so heavily on a

²⁹Bornin, et al., p. 13.

³⁰Ibid., p. 14.

particular selection process could lead a cursillista to a false sense of exclusiveness. The corrective is found in the book of Genesis, chapter 12, where it states that the people of God were blessed in order to be a blessing. Candidates are selected ideally for a purpose.

Bonnin stresses that those who should be selected to go on the weekend should be the vertebrae or backbone of their environment. He says that they must "have deep personality." He equates the deep personality to a "bone" which is solid and strong. He says that they should have the "capacity for humility," which he equates with "marrow." They should have awe before something or someone.³¹

There are exceptions to these guidelines, however. There are some, he says, who are not leaders but find a place in a group reunion. We are to make sure that they do not make up the majority of the Cursillo weekend. "Moreover, the Lord has His ways, and at times individuals who seemed 'standard' have changed into vertebrae when their personality has been uplifted by His Grace."³²

It is helpful to have an understanding of what the Cursillo Movement understands by the word "environment." It is not an ecological understanding, but a people situation. All of life is a community affair, a living together, people congregated for their own purposes. People live and interact with each other in all areas of human activity. By this process they contribute to the structuring of society, for good or for bad.

The moral tone or overall atmosphere of any society is a reflection of the life and attitude of the people who make it up.

³¹Ibid., pp. 14-15.

³²Ibid., p. 15.

Society is a product of all the environments, and if we see each environment as an association of people rather than in an abstract sense, then we can appreciate the fact that if we want to change society or its groupings of people then we must begin with the people who are already there and, particularly, with the people who are the agents of change among their fellowmen.³³

The prospective candidates are to be those with deep personality, self-control, able to make their own decisions, interiorly motivated, mature, free and responsible. They must be those who are vertebrae, leaders, self-starters, movers, those who are concerned about the social conditions of our times, those who have the ability and the desire to live in and for community, and those who are in a position to receive the sacraments or could become so.³⁴

There are five requirements for candidates:

- a. The candidates must desire to grow in perfection as persons and as Christians.
- b. They must have an attitude of listening, of friendship, and a disposition to change--to be converted
- c. The candidates must understand clearly that they are not going to attend a mere theoretical course, but that the three-day Cursillo is about life, about persons, about the Church, about a concrete, visible and experiential community.
- d. An eagerness for redemption and the hope of finding it, and of meeting their Savior during the Cursillo must be awakened in them.
- e. The ability to recognize and interpret the signs of the times, which is a necessary attitude to be on pilgrimage with the Church in the world, must also be awakened.³⁵

What does one do in order to encourage attendance on the part of these very special people who have been selected out of their environments? Jesus said, "I shall make you fishers of men" (Mark 1). It is this very concept which has been adopted by the Cursillo Movement. Eduardo Bonnín suggests that fishing be done as a team,

³³Hughes, p. 10.

³⁴The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement, p. 102.

³⁵Ibid., p. 103.

"putting yourself in their environment, winning them through friendship."³⁶ The Secretariat is to fish for the dissatisfied, says Bonnin.

The dissatisfied may be so because of some healthy restlessness, because of some injury, which may be localized in the head (those in contact with the Transcendent, instead of opening up in the face of awe, have closed off in anguish), in the heart (sentimental ruts), or in the will (failures). These, in order to repair the damage or to satisfy their restlessness are ready to listen to what they are told.³⁷

In order to satisfy their desire for truth, their desire to be more fully human, their desire to be saints, Cursillo leaders are called to share with them the means by which they may attain their desires. That means is a Cursillo weekend and the follow-up program which is geared to the rest of a person's life.³⁸

Juan Capo Bosch suggests a very natural approach. He says that the first step is one of friendship. We are to win his heart, being concerned about the candidate and his affairs without either overwhelming him or hurrying him. We are to anoint our love-motivated activity with human affection. This approach in friendship puts understanding before dialogue.

It is easy to accept ideas when attitudes are admired. The desire to follow and imitate one whom we admire is something we see happen spontaneously every day.³⁹

In summary, we are to know the candidate and his environment well. We are to gain his admiration and respect, and then suggest the Cursillo weekend as a fulfilling idea. These techniques are not

³⁶Bonnin, et al., p. 16. ³⁷Ibid. ³⁸Ibid., p. 17.

³⁹Juan Capo Bosch, Lower Your Nets (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1969), p. 57.

unknown to other movements in some degree. Obviously, it is how one uses the techniques, and for what purpose, that makes the difference whether they are used for good or for ill.

In the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, the Cursillo weekend application sheet is accompanied by a sponsor sheet. Each candidate is to have a sponsor to insure the candidate's participation in the Fourth Day activities and action as a leaven in his or her environment.

The second ingredient in the pre-Cursillo phase of the movement is the formation of a team who actually staff the Cursillo weekend. In our diocese, the lay leaders are chosen by the Diocesan Spiritual Director in consultation with the Bishop. The Secretariat nominates three names for both the men's weekend (a rector) and the women's weekend (the rectora). The Diocesan Spiritual Director prays about and then chooses one leader for each, and seeks the approval of the bishop.

The Diocesan Spiritual Director also chooses the weekend spiritual directors (3) in consultation with the lay leaders and in consultation with the bishop. The lay leaders in turn choose their team which includes rollistas (those who give lay talks during the weekend) and table leaders (those who sit with the candidates during the weekend at round tables while listening to talks and doing other activities). These table leaders help to form small communities within the larger community of the weekend. In the opinion of the writer, the impact of the weekend takes place mainly at the tables, especially as they become a model for group reunion. The lay leaders also choose a Head Cook who in turn chooses a kitchen team. The

kitchen team is a very integral part of the weekend. They make many sacrifices for the candidates and provide the "prayer backup" for the entire weekend. When they don't have their hands in the stove, they are on their knees praying for the candidates, team, and the general success of the weekend.

At least six weeks of team meetings, preceded by many hours on the telephone, take place before the weekend. Talks (rollos) are reviewed. In addition, a team community spirit is built, and prayers are offered for the candidates. This entire process takes from two to three months.

Since the team meetings are open to the entire Cursillo community, they could substitute for leaders' schools. In the opinion of this Spiritual Director this is acceptable only to the degree that the method of Cursillo is emphasized--that the talks be seen as a progression which point up the Cursillo method.

E. The three-day weekend

The three-day weekend of the Cursillo usually begins on a Thursday evening at 7:30 P.M. Between 30 and 40 candidates arrive with their sponsors. The sponsors leave a short time after the weekend begins. Forty-two team members greet the candidates and assure them that "everything has been taken care of and that this weekend is for them (the candidates)." The leaders of the team are introduced and basic logistical questions are answered. The weekend formally begins with a meditation given by one of the priest Spiritual Directors. The weekend is to end on Sunday with an exercise known as Clausura.

The meditation is entitled "Who am I?" (or Know Yourself).

Quite simply, it deals with the fact that unexamined life is a life of meaninglessness and misdirection. This begins the short retreat of the weekend. The candidates and team are now asked to maintain silence until they come to chapel in the morning. But before everyone is to go to bed, there are two more exercises. "The Stations of the Cross" (in the Roman Catholic tradition) or the "Passion of Our Lord" is read by the team in order to heighten the religious meaning of the unexamined life. A preliminary religious answer is given in a second meditation led by another Spiritual Director on the story of the prodigal son. The image begins to form even if dimly in the candidates' minds that God is seeking us out and that His love for humanity is somehow the key to existence. The candidates then retire for the evening in silence. The first night's retreat is not so much the first activity of the Cursillo as it is the last stage of the pre-Cursillo. Our Lord retired for a night of prayer and silence before all the great events of His life.⁴⁰

On the morning of what is known as the first, day, that is Friday, the candidates are awakened at an early hour and asked to proceed to the chapel for the third meditation of the weekend. This meditation is entitled "The Three Glances of Christ." Continuing the theme of the previous evening of "Who am I?" one of the Spiritual Directors speaks of Jesus as he glanced at three people--the rich

⁴⁰The Cursillo Weekend (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1968), p. 15.

young man, Judas, and Simon Peter. On a woman's Cursillo, three women of the Bible are sometimes used as illustrations. The point of each one of the three glances is that Christ looked sorrowfully yet compassionately on each one of the characters. The underlying concern of Jesus is "would that you would be with me if you had the faith and the courage!"

Following breakfast and a round of introductions at which time each person, team and candidates are introduced, the candidates are led to the "rollo" room where, over the next three days, a series of fifteen talks or rollos will be given (10 by laypersons, 5 by Spiritual Directors).⁴¹ A Rollo is a Spanish word which is translated humorously as a "long boring talk." The candidates are seated around tables of eight persons, two of which are table leaders.

The rollos to be given on the first day are entitled "Ideal," "Grace," "Laymen in the Church," "Holy Spirit," "Piety." After each rollo is given (in the Diocese of San Diego they are limited to 25 minutes in duration), each group at the tables graphically illustrates a summary of what themes the candidates heard in the rollo. These illustrations are hung on the wall of the rollo room, so that the candidates might gain a sense of the progression of the talks.

⁴¹The writer will summarize the fifteen talks as he reviews some of the major events of each day on the weekend. He will present material from his own experience, the Spiritual Directors' Manual, and a set of unpublished outlines which are part of the library of the Cursillo movement in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego.

1. The First Day - Friday. The first rollo on Friday is the one entitled "Ideal." Who am I? How does Christ see me? These are two of the questions that will probably be in the conscious candidate's mind at this point on the weekend. The Ideal talk states that a person's ideal will be the objective of the ideas which direct his choices toward that which is most worthwhile to him. No human life exists without an ideal. In childhood we long for games and toys. In adulthood we long for money, family, honor, ambition. Ideal gives direction and purpose. It is something of high value. It is something attainable. If you want to know your ideal, take a long look at how you spend your time, money and what you think about most. But above all, you must have an ideal in order to be human. This rollo is given by a layperson.

The second rollo is given by a Spiritual Director of which there are three on the weekend. The rollo is entitled "Grace." The ideal talk was an invitation to be a fully human person. However, God calls us to an even greater dignity--to an even more wonderful existence. This existence has to do with God's grace. He sheds his love, his grace upon us continually, whether we are good or bad. Grace does not detract from or replace our ~~human~~ nature. We continue to be and act, but if we accept his grace, in union with Him. Accepting His grace, we experience a new purpose, power, and peace in Him. If we invite God to live with us through His grace, we are faced with a fundamental option to accept and respond to God's love and experience an abundant life or to ignore or reject His love and experience continuing frustration.

The third rollo of Friday is called "Laymen (Laywomen) in the Church." The problem today is the world has turned its back to God and we must seek a "visible" solution. It is the body of Christ, a community of those who live in union with Christ and perpetuate His redemptive mission on earth. There needs to be dialogue between clergy and laity, communication and collaboration if Christ's redemptive mission is to be carried out. The layman is called to be active in the church.

"Holy Spirit" is the title of the fourth talk. The candidates have been challenged by the triple call to be human persons; to be Christian human persons in grace; and to be active and responsible members of the church. The challenge may appear to be overwhelming. The candidates may be asking how they can hope to measure up to it. This talk is the proclamation of the power of the Holy Spirit, and the availability of this transforming power to all believers. This talk is given by a Spiritual Director.

The final talk of the day is given by a layman and is entitled "Piety." This talk disposes of the false concepts of piety--the individualistic relationship to God; the dutiful but inwardly shallow; the hypocritical. True piety is directing one's whole life to God. A true and authentic piety knows, lives, and spreads Christian living as described in the preceding rollos.

A number of demonstrations of love are presented to and involve the candidate which serve to heighten his experience of what is being described in the talks. These demonstrations take place throughout the weekend. The author will describe one now, but the

others he wishes to share by inviting the reader to explore the possibility of attending a weekend. He refers you to your local Episcopal or Roman Catholic Diocese for more information. Suffice it to say that these demonstrations of love shower God's grace on the candidate and confront him in a positive and moving way with the power and overwhelming care of Christ.

One demonstration must be mentioned in this paper. Its place in the schedule of events is immediately following the talk on the Holy Spirit. It is the time of Palanca.⁴² In Cursillo, palanca stands for sacrifices made by people for other people. At this point in the Cursillo the cooks bring out colorful cards and letters from many people addressed specially to each candidate stating that sacrifices of time, effort, and prayer are being made on the candidate's behalf during the weekend. The candidates can gain a sense of the larger loving church praying for them for a meaningful weekend. Because most candidates are emotionally moved by this action, Kleenex boxes are distributed at this time as well. It is difficult to escape the "emotion" of this demonstration of the Love of God through his people strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is seen as a great lever, moving a person to Christ. This giving of palanca should be seen as normal for a person. Making sacrifices for someone, even if he does not know him personally, yet understanding the value of the sacrifice made.

⁴²In Spanish, palanca means lever; a staff or pole by which a burden is supported between two men; an exterior fortification with stakes.

Palanca needs to be shared out of love rather than from self-interest. "It is the detail of serving a meal, sharpening a pencil, or seeking an aspirin, which will make charity apparent in the environment."⁴³

2. The Second Day - Saturday. The next day, Saturday, usually called the Second Day (Thursday night is seen as the retreat section of Cursillo, the actual exercise beginning Friday morning), the meditation offered in the chapel before breakfast is entitled "The Figure of Christ." Who is Christ? What is he like? What are his divine and very human qualities? These are the themes dealt with in this meditation.

The first rollo on Saturday follows breakfast and is entitled "Study." In any field study is necessary for anyone who wants to master it. Scholars, artists, professional people of any kind improve their specialty by applying their mind. The person who is guided by the Christian Ideal of the Grace of God in Christ will find study a means to know and to understand the Christian Ideal better. People are called to life of Grace, share it with others, spread it in their environments. In order to do this well, people who want to live their Christianity to the full need to base their action on a meaningful prayer life and direct it through study of the Ideal they live by. This talk is given by a layperson.

⁴³When the author received palanca for the first time, he experienced a mixture of emotions, that of being touched by the hand of God and being brainwashed by the members of the movement.

"Sacraments" is the title of the following talk given by a Spiritual Director or a team of Spiritual Directors. The seven basic sacraments are described. It is hoped that the candidates will discover the transforming work of Christ through the Sacraments so that a personal, sincere and committed encounter with him may be realized and that the candidate may center his life in the communal living of Christianity. Sometimes a walking/instructed Mass concludes this rollo.

"Action" is the title of the next rollo on Saturday. This rollo describes the third part of a tripod of rollos which form the basis of the Christian life as described in the Cursillo Movement. The three parts of the tripod are: "Piety," "Study," and "Action." The theme here is that one cannot live a full Christian life without all three of these elements. If a person only has one or two of the elements, the tripod falls down, as does a person's practice of Christianity when one or more of the elements is missing.

The "Action" rollo stresses that people are called to live and love, to live and love in Christ and to share that life and love, by bringing others to a "personal" relationship with Christ. The Christian cannot be satisfied with living a life of grace in isolation. He needs to let Christ shine through his life so that environments are illuminated with Him. Christians are called to make a friend, be a friend, and bring a friend to Christ.

Following "Action" is the rollo on "Obstacles to Grace." The Christian Life has been explained for the candidates in terms of the "Grace of God" and the elements of piety, study, and action. But

obstacles under the general heading of "sin" block him in his striving to live the Christian life. This talk is concerned with how the candidates can overcome sin. Prayer, the Sacrament of Penance, mortification, spiritual direction, and Christian friendship are presented as the primary remedies for sin. Obstacles to the life in Grace cannot be from God. He offers grace freely to all. The obstacles are our refusal to accept his gift. The refusal to respond, to be available, is sin. It can take the form of active rebellion or the form of passive indifference. This is a Spiritual Director's talk.

"Leaders" is the final talk of the day. The candidate is called to be a leader in his environment. A leader is one who leads and rules, one who influences others. A Christian leader hears the call of Christ and goes decisively into apostolic action. The success of the work depends on the quality of the Christian as a leader. Natural qualities include knowing the ideal; knowing reality; discipline; empathy; initiative; being generous. Supernatural qualities include a lively faith (joyful trust in what God can do through them), humility, (the awareness that we are Christ's instruments), hope (the leader does his best and trusts God for the rest), charity (depth of love will determine the dedication). To practice these qualities a person needs to want to be like Christ, and lead others to the Father.

3. The Third Day - Sunday. Early Sunday morning, there is a great demonstration of God's love through His people. Suffice it to say that many candidates interpret this experience as one of the high

emotional moments of the weekend. Going to chapel following this experience, they hear a meditation on "Christ's Message to the Cursillista." The Spiritual Director who gives this talk emphasizes that we are called out to feed His sheep. The energy we feel from the early morning experience is to be translated into energy for others--leading others to Christ and ministering to their needs.

Quite logically, the first Rollo of the day is on the "Study of the Environment." Here the method of Cursillo, the movement, is explained. Indeed, the method of Cursillo is the central theme on Sunday.⁴⁴

The "study of the environment" rollo states that to win over the environment we must prepare to have a battle plan. War is waged on three fronts--ourselves, individuals around us, and groups around us. Environmental transformation is achieved by introducing Christian life into the environment.

The next rollo is one of methods as well and is called "Life in Grace" (or Christian life). We will never be effective in penetrating our environments unless we are constantly in a state of progressive conversion. Progressive conversion is moving in our hearts from a position of self-centeredness towards a position of

⁴⁴The author is concerned that the candidates are very tired at this point in the weekend and they do not hear the message of the method. Herein lies the weakness of our movement in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego. We hear the message of the love of God and that we are called to be leaders in environments, but we do not have a good grasp of the method by which we can carry this out.

Christ-centeredness. Abiding in Jesus means for me having Jesus as a personal savior and Lord. If we hope to continually deepen our union with God, it is essential to regularly check our priorities with a spiritual director. The importance of the Eucharist, Penance, and Marriage and Family are stressed. And finally, prayer is given high priority as our means of communicating with God by being honest with him, discerning and listening, waiting and experiencing His Love.

The next rollo in method is called "Christian Community in Action." The best way to conquer an environment is through teamwork--the teamwork of leaders. This is the most effective way possible. We are the Church. We are the Christian community. This rollo describes how to achieve apostolic action and the conditions for action.

"Total Security" is the title of the following talk. Our objective is to bring about the continuation of the Cursillo. We look for a new life which will make it possible to be and to do everything the Cursillo teaches. "Total Security" means safeguarding a treasure which one does not want to lose--to make secure the living experience in Christian Living--i.e. praying, studying, doing things together for Christ. This rollo describes group reunions. We will have total security because friendship overcomes all obstacles. In friendship with each other and with Christ, we are brothers and sisters in Him.

The last rollo is usually given by the Rector or Rectora and is entitled "The Fourth Day" (Cursillista beyond Cursillo).

The emphasis in this talk is on perseverance in transforming environments for Christ--the environments to which the cursillista is returning. The action of vibrant Christians is a Christian life that

is conscious and growing, and part of a great team effort, in the mission to spread the Kingdom of God.

The Cursillo weekend concludes with the closing ceremony called "Clausura." The candidates are commissioned by the Diocesan Spiritual Director for ministry in their environments and are given a diocesan Cursillo cross as a sign of this ministry.

Through modeling group reunion (described in the next section of this chapter) and describing what is fundamental to being a Christian, the Cursillo weekend should be seen as a launching pad into the Fourth Day. The weekend is not an end in itself.

If a real, living Christian community has developed as a result of the three days, then the Cursillo experience may be seen as a success. This is the Ultreya at its best. It bears witness to everything that was expressed on the weekend.⁴⁵

The enthusiasm which most new cursillistas express after the weekend needs to be channeled into Christian action. Each individual is called to find his own place in the Church and direct his efforts to Christianizing environments.⁴⁶

F. Post-Cursillo

It is hoped that each person has experienced an encounter with

⁴⁵Cursillo leaders need to promote the understanding that the community building process is not to lead into the formation of an exclusive organization.

⁴⁶More exploration of the direction of Christianizing of human environments is needed. One Episcopal Diocese is concentrating on the renewal of parishes using the Cursillo method.

himself, with Christ, and with the Christian community, and has left the three-day weekend with a new attitude (metanoia).

The post-Cursillo was designed to offer each person who has experienced the weekend a way of sustaining that attitude. The attitude is sustained through a particular structure. This is one of the great advantages of the movement. The weekend provides the background and the impetus to live the life of grace. As noted above, a specific method for living out this life is outlined on the third day of the Cursillo. It is a method of progressive conversion (a deepening relationship with Christ, as described in the "piety" rollo) and of being an apostle for Christ (a leader, an evangelizer) in one's own natural environments. This is accomplished in accordance with a diocesan plan, if one exists.

The structure is particularly designed to sustain the cursillista because the world in which he lives is basically not Christian. At least it is indifferent to the Christian way. Because of this atmosphere, the new cursillista can more easily find the opportunity to become lukewarm and return to his former state of mind and living which was present before the weekend. The program is one of maintaining the spiritual power of the weekend experience as well as helping the cursillista grow and progress in understanding and Christian action.⁴⁷

The post-Cursillo is not for the Cursillo movement; it is for the Church and its function is to provide the opportunity for everyone

⁴⁷Gerald Hughes, "Ultreya," Ultreya Magazine, VI, 4 (December 1977), 2.

who makes a Cursillo to commit himself in his own way according to his degree of conversion and more so through the group and through the reunion of the groups [which is ultreya] so that each one of us commits himself more each day.⁴⁸

The main ingredients of the post-Cursillo program are three in number. They are:

1. Group reunion,
2. Ultreyas, and
3. Spiritual direction.

Before proceeding to a description of each of these elements, the reader should note that perseverance is the key concept when speaking of the post-Cursillo. The new cursillista may be asking the question at the end of his weekend experience, "Will I have the strength to persevere, to continue courageously in the way I have begun?"⁴⁹ The two rollos of "Holy Spirit" and "Obstacles to Grace" speak meaningfully to this question. The understanding here is that God will send help and there are spiritual aids which help the cursillistas in their quest. Juan Hervas quotes Matthew 24:13 where Jesus says, "He who perseveres to the end will be saved."⁵⁰ And again Hervas states that "the Christian delivers himself to every good work, and a mortified life ... [and] the cursillista by his own strength can do nothing but that he can do all things in Jesus Christ who strengthens him."⁵¹

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Juan Hervas, Cursillos in Christianity Instrument of Christian Renewal (Madrid: Ultreya Publications, 1967), p. 80.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 81.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 82-83.

The Cursillo offers its hearers two great solutions to maintain their life of grace in the future. The contact with Christ through the interior life, nourished and increased by prayer; the sacraments, the practice of virtues, etc., and the contact with the brothers through the formation of the "Groups" and perfect regularity in periodical weekly meetings and collective acts.⁵²

1. The Group Reunion is a weekly meeting of friends all of whom have attended a Cursillo weekend. The duration of the meeting is usually one hour. The purpose of the meeting is for each member of the group to share his life of piety, study and action. "Group Reunions are really the heart of the Cursillo method."⁵³

The method of the meeting is to follow a small "Service Sheet" which describes through a series of questions the basic elements of the gathering.⁵⁴ After an opening prayer, invoking the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the reciting of the Lord's Prayer, the group answers in turn six questions.

Under the heading of "Piety" there are two questions:

a. "With what spiritual aids have you nourished your vital union with Christ this week?" This can include attendance at church and the reception of communion, a visit to one's spiritual director, participation in an inspirational or devotional activity.

b. "What was the moment in which you felt closest to Christ?" The question needs to be limited to the most powerful sense of the presence of Christ during the past week. The main purpose of

⁵²Ibid., p. 83.

⁵³Al Blatnik, Your Fourth Day (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1973), p. 13.

⁵⁴Roman Catholic Service Sheet (Dallas: National Cursillo Center, n.d.).

this question is to remind the group members of the presence of the activity of God in their lives.

The next question falls under the category of "Study": "What have you done to understand better the gift of God?" The central thrust of this question is concerned with what meaning and direction has the cursillista gained from his reading. The gift refers to the gift of God's grace which is the central concept of the movement. The summary of the rollo on "Grace" provides the basic meaning and thrust of this question.

The last three questions are listed under the heading of "Action":

- a. "What apostolic success did the Lord accomplish through you in your family, in your work, in your environment?"
- b. "With what apostolic failure did the Lord wish to test you in your family, in your work, and in your environment?" and
- c. "'How did you fulfill last week's plan? What are you planning for next week?"

The emphasis in these three questions is on "the Lord's work" and the cursillista as an instrument of the Lord.

There is also concern that group accomplish things together. This is called for on the seventh point of the Service Sheet. The writer's group reunion planned and accomplished a men's and boys' breakfast for our parish which included a time for prayer and biblical reflection.

The eighth point on the Service Sheet is characteristic of the Catholic influence. An "our Father" is to be said for those who have

not fulfilled their commitments. If one of the members of the group is not present, an "our Father" is to be said for him.

The Group Reunion closes with a prayer of thanksgiving: "We give you thanks, Almighty God, for all the benefits You have given us. You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen."

Group Reunions provide the place where "Cursillo becomes lasting and Christianity becomes constant."⁵⁵ According to Bonnin, "everything that is lived as a Christian should be lived together."⁵⁶ The Group Reunion, then, is a means by which people can live together the Christianity they have come to know on the weekend. The Cursillo literature stresses that deepest form of living together is friendship. "Therefore the Group Reunion is friendship raised to the sphere of the Transcendental: friendship converted into permanent actual Grace."⁵⁷ The purpose of the Group Reunion, then, is to make possible for each cursillista a normal, lasting, and joyful living together within a Christian framework with other people.

The Group Reunion is also the channel and source for apostolic action within the environments of the members.

Bob Buckner cautions against apostolic plans being carried out as a group. He says:

Apostolic action in the Cursillo means individual action. Although the weekly apostolic plan may be either an individual plan and/or a group plan the emphasis in the Cursillo method is placed upon each individual's plan⁵⁸-with support in prayer and sacrifice from the friendship group.⁵⁸

⁵⁵Bonnin, et al., p. 79. ⁵⁶Ibid. ⁵⁷Ibid., p. 80.

⁵⁸Bob Buckner, "Weekly Apostolic Plan," Ultreya Magazine, VI,3 (November 1977), 11.

"Each apostolic success shared in Group Reunion is a whisper from Christ that repeats, 'Go and do likewise.'"⁵⁹ "Likewise" does not necessarily mean the same thing. When the man in the gospels asked Jesus, "who is my brother?," he did not go out to the road of Jericho but onto the road of his own personal life.⁶⁰

The action called for in the Cursillo movement is that of bringing a friend to Christ. This is an echo from the "Action" rollo: "Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ." The care that is shown for others by the cursillista may lead someone to ask, "why do you do these things for me?" The answer is in effect, "because God loves us both." This is a method of invitation, not of brow-beating. It is an invitation which comes out of the simple, everyday, and ordinary things of our daily lives. But the cursillista is called to have a plan of action, and the Holy Spirit will use the plan.⁶¹

"The Group Reunion is the instrument the Cursillos offer to initiate a Christian communal life, and thus to insure the progressive conversion and the leavening of environments in the Gospel spirit."⁶² The purpose of the reunions is to strengthen, maintain, and enlarge the vision of apostolic dimension of their members. This is nothing more than increasing the idealism, self-surrender, and the spirit of charity of the members. These three conditions are indispensable for apostolic zeal.⁶³

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²The Fundamental Ideas, p. 115.

⁶³Hervas, The Leaders' Manual, p. 270.

There are three important factors which insure success in the group reunion:

- a. Groups are composed of people who have a natural and easy friendship;
- b. Groups work best when they have plenty of time to nurture and grow;
- c. Groups work well when their members are open and generous about their lives in Christ.⁶⁴

2. Ultreyas are weekly reunions of all the permanent group reunions in a particular area. According to Gerald Hughes, national lay director for the Roman Catholic Cursillos in the United States, the ultreya uses the method of group reunion and the various groups intermingle with each other for the first half of the meeting. The cursillistas are thereby introduced to a broad range of people and possibilities with each person sharing his own spiritual growth and his apostolic success and failure in their various environments.⁶⁵ Like the Cursillo weekend, the ultreya is a model Christian community helping the cursillistas to persevere in a world which is not Christian. Hughes states that the true mission of the Ultreya is to see that:

Each person leaves a better person and committed to live out their commitments for another week; each permanent group leaves more committed to the ongoing transformation of their environment--each environment, family, neighborhood, place of work, etc. is being gradually transformed by the Gospel.⁶⁶

⁶⁴Blatnik, pp. 13-14. The Group Reunions are not meant to be sensitivity sessions or group therapy where one might experience criticism and rebuke.

⁶⁵Hughes, Let's Keep It Simple, p. 52.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 54.

The Ultreya is "meant to foster, in a conscious and growing way, the life of being a saint and an apostle, not in being a cursillista. The perseverance method is only a means to live Church in the world, that is, to build a living Christianity into society."⁶⁷

As was noted in the chapter on history, the Cursillos were born out of the preparation for the pilgrimage to the tomb of the apostle St. James. Medieval pilgrims on their way to the tomb used to utter the cry, "ultreya!" The journey was hard and long. The word "ultreya" is one of encouragement, of unsatisfied longing, of perseverance, of determination to continue the march until the last day. It is the watchword of optimism, trusting God's grace.⁶⁸

Juan Hervas states that Ultreya "... insures the fruit of the Cursillos in the very high percentage of cursillistas who persevere in their purpose to live in a state of grace."⁶⁹

Hervas cautions against reducing Ultreyas to a lecture, study or catechism thereby diverting from the primary purpose of them being a reunion of the Group Reunions. This reunion of the groups is meant to be a meeting and living experience (vivencial) of friends who share the experience of fundamental Christianity, as they came to know it on the Cursillo weekend.⁷⁰ This is known as the "primitive ultreya" in contrast to a "teaching ultreya" which includes a priest's systematic lecture on the doctrines of the church.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 55. ⁶⁸Hervas, p. 283.

⁶⁹Hervas, Cursillos in Christianity Instrument of Christian Renewal, p. 89.

⁷⁰Hervas, Questions and Problems, p. 115.

Bonnin mentions that the meeting is to last one and a half hours⁷¹ whereas Hervas mentions one hour.⁷² The schedule of events is to include "floating" group reunions,⁷³ possibility of a priest's talk on doctrine, a short lay witness talk, an evaluation of the lay talk, closing words by the priest.

The ultreya is not meant to override the cursillista's attendance at regular worship in his or her parish, but it is meant to be a supplement.⁷⁴ It is needful according to Hughes because "of all the elements in the Cursillo, with the possible exception of the Leaders' School, the Ultreya ought to be the one thing that is permanent because it is supposed to provide stability to the community of those who are in the post-Cursillo."⁷⁵

Those responsible for the ultreya should not be concerned so much about it turning out well as an event, but rather that the participants ought to be better persons because of what happened there. The collective action must never smother or replace the personal encounters that should go on between persons. We must not corral persons as much as channel them into a way of sharing generally as a community and specifically with other persons.⁷⁶

3. Spiritual Direction is the third element of the post-Cursillo. Each person needs another person with whom he can talk about God in his life. This person, whether priest or lay, must be

⁷¹Bonnin, et al., p. 95.

⁷²Hervas, The Leaders' Manual, p. 286.

⁷³Small groups meeting on the order of a group reunion without a week to week meeting in the same group.

⁷⁴The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement, p. 120.

⁷⁵Hughes, "Ultreya," VI, 5 (January 1978), 2.

⁷⁶Hughes, "Ultreya," VI, 4 (December 1977), 2.

a listener. In the dialogue these two persons have with one another the spiritual director must not lead as much as discover, not direct so much as to unfold, not order as much as encourage, not hold as much as channel and not instruct as much as help so that his friend discovers what the Lord is doing in his life.⁷⁷

Hughes states that no one should give serious spiritual direction in the area of piety, study, and action unless he has a spiritual director. Further, the director needs to respect his charge. Any advice shared must come from the director's own encounter in piety, study, and action for the Cursillos speak of a living experience. There is enough theory. "To talk of anything without experience reduces the import to theory, too much of which we have heard already."⁷⁸

Hervas mentions the necessity of the priest as a spiritual director on both the Cursillo weekend and at the ultreyas. The priest is also supposed to be in the background "backing up" the group reunions. After the Cursillo weekend, the new cursillista needs a faithful, highly skilled competent friend, and this is the Spiritual Director, who, furthermore, has the grace of his position to assure his success in this important task of spiritually orienting souls."⁷⁹

The structure of Cursillos in Christianity, at its best, functions to aid the cursillistas in continuing their life pilgrimage as Christians. This pilgrimage involves basically progressive

⁷⁷Hughes, Let's Keep It Simple, p. 40.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 41.

⁷⁹Hervas, Leaders' Manual, p. 261.

conversion and apostolic action within one's natural environments,
in accordance with a diocesan pastoral plan.

CHAPTER V

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION IN THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT

A. The Cursillo Movement is rooted within the Church

Based on his several years of experience within the Cursillo Movement, the author believes that the Cursillo Movement, in order to be the Cursillo Movement, must be firmly rooted within the Church. It must maintain its basic structure as described in chapter four or it will cease to be a Cursillo Movement. The local diocesan bishop and plan serve to insure this structure. It has been the author's experience that where there is no positive involvement of the diocesan bishop and a plan undergirding the Cursillo that the Movement becomes unmanageable and its original sense and direction are lost as well.

At the Clausura, or closing ceremonies of the weekend, the Diocesan Spiritual Director presents the candidates of the weekend with a cross necklace distinctive to the diocese which he represents. The cross is symbolic of the commission of Christ to be his lay minister in the world, i.e., to be a natural leader in one's several environments, bringing the friendship of Christ to the people of those environments. The Diocesan Spiritual Director is not necessarily a member of each weekend team and thereby might be seen as an outsider who comes in to intrude on the closing ceremonies and one who usurps the role of the weekend spiritual director or the role of the lay leaders. This cannot be further from the truth.

The Diocesan Spiritual Director represents the Church in

general. The Cursillo weekend is not the whole church, it is a part of the Church. Those who attend a weekend need to have this larger vision else Cursillo becomes "the end all and be all." Cursillo is a method within the Church which is meant to promote renewal within the Church and to promote apostolic action within a diocesan plan.

The Diocesan Spiritual Director is then, by his presence, an incarnation of this concept of Cursillo. An effective Spiritual Director should explain this to the assembled group made up of the candidates, their sponsors, the team, and other cursillistas at the time of the Clausura.

In the Proposed Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church, the Church is described as the community of the New Covenant, the Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head and of which all baptized persons are members.¹ There is only one Body, the Church. Hence, Cursillo cannot be allowed to become a separate Church. By the same token, not everyone in the Church has to be a cursillista. "The Mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ."²

The Cursillo Movement is one of several renewal movements within the Church. It is meant to send cursillistas back to their parishes filled with a new vigor and vitality, renewed in the ancient faith of the Church. They are then called to do the work of the Church. The Cursillo Movement offers a specific method by which this work may be accomplished.

¹Proposed Book of Common Prayer (New York: Church Hymnal Corporation and Seabury Press, 1977), p. 854.

²Ibid., p. 855.

B. The Interdependence of the Clergy and Laity

"The Church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members."³

Clergy and laity, the author believes, should work together as a team with each person fulfilling his function within the Body of Christ. "The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons."⁴

The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.⁵

The ministry of a priest is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as pastor to the people; to share with the bishop in the overseeing of the Church; to proclaim the Gospel; to administer the sacraments; and to bless and declare pardon in the name of God.⁶

Both clergy and laity share the same ministry. Each, however, have different functions. The laity are to bear witness to Christ, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation, and to take their place in the life of the Church. The clergy participate in these ministries as well since they, too, are a part of the laos, or the people of God.

There are special functions for a priest. He or she is to represent Christ and His Church as pastor, to oversee the Church, to proclaim the Gospel, administer sacraments, and to bless and declare pardon in the name of God.

Diocesan Spiritual Directors and weekend spiritual directors are usually priests, although nuns have been known to serve on Roman

³Ibid. ⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid., p. 856.

Catholic Cursillo weekends as directors. The author is not aware of a non-ordained person serving as a spiritual director. Beyond the Sacramental functions, there is no reason why well-trained and mature lay persons could not serve in this position. The reasons for this assertion will be made clear further in this chapter, when the "ground of being" of Spiritual Director is discussed.

The Roman Catholic literature of the Cursillo Movement in the United States and elsewhere tends to emphasize the "specialness" of the priest, rather than his humanity.

Michael C. Reilly, S.J., speaking in Ultreya Magazine, says, "This has been called the age of the laity. The Church is seen to be the whole people of God, no longer identified with the clergy or religious."⁷ Indeed, the ministries of the laity and the clergy complement one another. The laity can help priests to be in touch with the realities of daily life. The laity are sometimes able to minister more effectively and witness with great power. The clergy, on the other hand, inform the laity of the great treasures of the history of the Church in terms of the practice of spirituality, and they function in their particular roles as ministers of the sacraments. As stated before, both priests and laity share together in the priesthood of all believers, a commission given both at baptism.

The author believes that the laity see the priest in two ways--as priest and as person--in the Cursillo community. The spiritual directors are consulted in matters personal and practical. They are

⁷Michael C. Reilly, S.J., "Holiness and Development," Ultreya Magazine, VI,9 (May 1978), 2.

looked to as officers of the sacraments and teachers of the method of Cursillo. But the Cursillo community emphasizes by its very nature the humanity of the priest as well. In this aspect, the Cursillo community provides great strength. Priests and laity are in need of the Grace of God. In this common need, there is great power.

The author drafted a questionnaire concerning the various aspects of spiritual direction in the Cursillo Movement.⁸ Out of 55 inquiries sent to Episcopal priests involved in the Cursillo method in almost every area of the United States, 24 questionnaires were returned.

The question which referred to clergy and lay relationships within the Cursillo Movement was stated in the following way: "In what way do you see the clergy and the laity working together? (Ideally and Actually)? The general responses are as follows: In our group reunion we behave as equal ministers of Christ; ideally, the laity should keep control of this lay movement and clergy act only as resource consultants for spiritual direction and theological soundness, but in actuality the clergy try to take over the leadership; they should act as partners, but it is a delicate balance as it is in parish life; the clergy should teach pastoral skills such as group process and individual need awareness although many members of the laity have these skills; laity need encouragement by the clergy to be leaders; laity translates the doctrine taught by clergy into life; the clergy are the primary and essential resource to the laity who carry the leadership and organizational responsibility; clergy must be willing

⁸See Appendix A for questionnaire sent.

to take a second place; Cursillo provides an opportunity for the team of clergy and lay to develop leadership together; we should operate together as the Body of Christ; clergy and laity should be open with each other and the true team spirit be seen by the candidates on the weekend; the laity are listed as the first order of ministry in the Proposed Book of Common Prayer; clergy provide insight, support and guidance.

On this same question, a group of ten leading lay persons in the movement in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego were asked how they would respond. Their answers (six who responded) are as follows: forget the distinctions of clergy and laity; clergy are most effective when giving homilies directed at what we should be doing in terms of Cursillo; the most beautiful sight in the world is to see a group of clergy concelebrating the Eucharist and thoroughly enjoying what they are doing; ideally the laity would do the work with guidance and seeking direction from the clergy; reality--laity thinks they "know it all" and resent advice; ideally and actually there is a caring and sharing relationship; ideally, the clergy should be supportive, but in actuality the laity are still in awe of the clergy; total unity in sharing which is a rare opportunity for closeness in understanding between clergy and laity.

The creative tension expressed in these responses reflects the general rethinking of the roles of the clergy and laity in the Church today. Four types of responses emerge from the respondents. On one end of the spectrum there are those who believe that laity should have control of the movement, with the clergy taking second

place. Some see the clergy a resource for doctrinal interpretation and ways of working with people. Some see the clergy as encouraging the laity in their ministry. Finally at the other end of the spectrum, the clergy and laity are seen as sharing equally in the ministry as partners.

According to Juan Hervas, "The priest is in reality the heart, the living axis of the whole Cursillo."⁹ This role is not apparent since the immediate structure is in the hands of the laity. To balance this understanding Hervas states:

The Spiritual Director should make an effort to understand the problems and place himself at the point of view of each of the cursillistas. The spirit of sacrifice, of surrender and supernatural radiation at every moment, united with a joviality, optimism, manliness, cheerfulness and sympathy with all, will make his labor easy, making the cursillistas open their hearts to him with confidence.¹⁰

The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement takes note of the past "Clericalism" of the Roman Catholic Church but also notes that there must be some hierarchal structure if there is to be a Church. This document seeks some middle ground by stating that "the Church is the priestly, prophetic, and royal People of God in which, all have a common dignity and mission, and that there is no member who does not have a part in the mission of the whole body."¹¹ But it goes on to state that Christ ordained a hierarchal Church.¹²

⁹Juan Hervas, Cursillos in Christianity Instrument of Christian Renewal (Dallas: Ultreya Press, 1967), p. 414.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1974), p. 67.

¹²Ibid.

The author believes that indeed both the priest and the laity have their ministries given at Baptism. Each have their functional ministries within the Body of Christ. They share a common mission and should work together as a team to do Christ's work. They can respect one another out of their common humanity and their single mission under Christ.

C. The Diocesan Plan

In the eyes of this writer, it is important that there be some over-all strategy or plan that a diocesan secretariat is working with in accordance with the thoughts of the local bishop. Juan Hervas states that "the Cursillos in Christianity were born in the warmth of a diocesan community, under the distinguished direction of their own bishop."¹³ Otherwise, the movement in a particular area tends to focus on the weekend alone. This is counter to the understanding of the goals of the method. The wise Spiritual Director should gather the leadership of the Cursillo community and through a retreat gathering convince them through experiential means of the value of the entire method, not just the weekend. It is interesting to note that many people do not understand the basic thrust of the movement even though they have experienced the entire weekend and listened to the rollos on the third day. The Spiritual Director must win their hearts to the method so that they live it. The director must be a living model of what he is promoting or else he will not be believed.

¹³Juan Hervas, The Leaders' Manual for Cursillos in Christianity (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1964), p. 72.

Although this model sounds very much like Bishop Hervas, the author hastens to add that any leader with enough zeal, whether he be of the laity or the priesthood could stimulate and promote such action as is described above.

The plan involves an accurate study of the environments in which the cursillistas are involved. The study is promoted through group reunions by the pre-Cursillo committee which is an arm of the Secretariat, operating under the guidance of the bishop. Natural leaders from these environments would be encouraged to attend a Cursillo weekend (sponsored by members of group reunions), and then in turn be encouraged to "Christianize" their environments.

The Cursillo "literature" advocates a step by step method.¹⁴

D. The Spiritual Director and the over-all goal of Cursillo

The question in this area of the questionnaire reads as follows: "Where does the Spiritual Director fit into the over-all goal of Cursillo: i.e., transforming leaders into committed Christians for the purpose of transforming the world for Christ?"

The two most frequent categories of response were that the Spiritual Director was to emphasize over and over again what the goal of Cursillo is and that the director was to be like an elder brother who directs and encourages the laity in their mission. He is to be a confessor and a guide for this mission. Other comments included

¹⁴Juan Hervas, The Priest and the Cursillos (Madrid: Ultreya, 1967), pp. 44-46.

"project a strong purposeful quality of Christian commitment in order to catch the imagination of the candidates:" be "an expeditor, an upholder of orthodoxy, and source of discipline."

The effective Spiritual Director is the priest who knows that he is part of a team and that each member of the team has a particular function to perform. The functions are performed in the context of the over-all goals of the Cursillo Movement. The goal is to transform environments through the transformation of natural leaders thereby "making the whole creation new." The Spiritual Director brings the weakness of his humanity before God and before the people with whom he is working (both candidates, team members, and the larger Cursillo community) and offers that weakness so that the strength of God found in His Grace might be proclaimed. As Christ was broken for the salvation of all humankind, so Spiritual Directors must offer themselves as broken instruments in God's hands--thereby the world is transformed and made whole.

E. The Qualities of a Spiritual Director

Hervas states in The Priest and the Cursillos that the priest must be a man of God, a man of the Church, and a man of his time.¹⁵ Again, the reader is asked to consider the possibility of the Spiritual Director role being filled by a layperson.

Under the category of being a "man of God," Hervas discusses "the primacy of the interior and supernatural life." By this he means

¹⁵Ibid., p. 6.

that the priest's life must be nourished by an intimate union with Christ and an imitation of Him, by word and example. He ought to be a man of prayer so that he might have "knowledge of the source of living water and of the mysterious fountain which makes everything bear fruit."¹⁶ Priests of the Cursillo must have the "courage of an intensely cultivated and practiced faith."¹⁷

Another point under the category of "man of God" is that the priest must "cultivate natural virtues."

He should be modest in appearance, in countenance and dress; he should be trusting and truthful; keep his promises; control his actions and his words; respect others; bear patiently with the evil; be affable, and what is more important, obey the laws of God ... the possession and the practice of the virtues that are called natural, helps the dignity of the supernatural life, above all when one practices and cultivates them to appear a good Christian and a suitable herald and minister of Christ.¹⁸

Obedience, reverence for authority, is one of the virtues distinguishing a priest as "a man of the Church." He is to do nothing without the consent of the bishop, in Hervás' view. He is to be very obedient to his bishop and remain closely united with him.¹⁹

All efforts must converge on the bishop, who is responsible for the apostolate in his diocese, responsible for the doctrine that is taught in it. Lacking this deep incorporation into what is the common work of the Church in this region of that environment, the individual ministry of the priest runs the risk of losing its natural fruitfulness, just as a river cut off from its source is not long in drying up.²⁰

In terms of being a "man of his time" the priest is called to have an intimate knowledge of the reality that surrounds him, maintaining in perfect balance his external activity with his interior life.²¹

¹⁶Ibid., p. 9. ¹⁷Ibid., p. 12. ¹⁸Ibid., pp. 14-15.
¹⁹Ibid., p. 18. ²⁰Ibid., p. 19. ²¹Ibid., p. 6.

Eduardo Bonnin and his co-authors of Structure of Ideas speak specifically of the "Function of the Spiritual Directors." They are to make themselves loved, by loving; to make themselves respected, by respecting; to lead spiritually and to center doctrinally. They are not to be concerned with the 'technique' of Cursillo, which will always lessen the effectiveness in the 'spiritual.' They are to simply practice their ministry. They are to give spiritual rollos and give meditations on the weekends.²²

The Rev. Frederick Bartlett, who preceded the author as Spiritual Director of the Cursillos in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, stated in a personal interview that there are three areas in which he sees responsibility for the director.²³ The first area is theology. The priest is to give constant definition of how God works in the daily lives of men and women. The understanding shared must be related to a sacramental understanding, related directly to life, and bespeak of the process which God uses to show people his activity. The clergy need to give whole-hearted support to the Cursillo Movement, follow the outlines given in the Leaders' Manual and in the Spiritual Director's Manual. Laity and clergy must respect each other in their separate functions; there is no need for take over but to maintain a constant dialogue between clergy and laity. The priest, according to Bartlett, has a responsibility to the structure of the Episcopal Church. He has a responsibility to keep people in the mainstream of Episcopal thought and understanding.

²²Eduardo Bonnin, et al., The Structure of Ideas (Dallas: National Ultreya Publications, 1965), p. 42.

²³Frederick Bartlett, Personal Interview in Indio, CA., October 9, 1978.

The second area of concern for Bartlett is what he calls "the curate concept." Priests are to be the curates of souls. They are responsible to be an available counselor, and confessor for the community. They are responsible for the spiritual life of the people. The spiritual directors are called upon to listen, to counsel, to administer the sacraments, to give absolution, and to preach and teach.

Finally, Bartlett sees a third concern of ecumenical responsibility with the Roman Catholic Cursillo community. The Spiritual Director represents the Episcopal community at Roman Catholic functions. "We have a responsibility for dialogue with the Roman community particularly since they gave us our start as an Episcopal movement in San Diego."²⁴

Bartlett stressed that "power comes to full strength in weakness. Without God I am nothing."²⁵ The spiritual director is to put God first and is to remain humble in the community of love. This stance is sensed by the Cursillo community. The understanding here is that God makes us "somebody" and that there needs to be less of self-assertion.

We have to be strong for Christ, not strong for ourselves. We have to live in the same way we ask others to live. We have to be quiet and still, but firm.²⁶

The author understands the above statements to reflect that the Spiritual Director's job is an art which is strengthened through prayer and a life focused on Christ who is the Son of the God of Grace.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

At the Kansas City meeting of the leaders of the Episcopal Cursillo communities in September 1978, the writer had an opportunity to interview Gerald Hughes, who is the national lay director for the Roman Catholic Cursillo Movement. Mr. Hughes was asked to comment on the role of the Spiritual Director. Primarily, he sees the priest as a facilitator in the midst of exercising his priestly ministry. He must meet the needs of the community, understand the method, and promote the role of the laity. He helps them discover their baptismal obligations and the particular vocation which each person has as a call from God.

Secondly, Hughes states that the Spiritual Director should be an exemplar of what the movement proposes. He must have a commitment of the community through deeply sharing with others in the Cursillo community, by strong participation in the post-Cursillo program, by being in direct communication with the lay leaders. He is to allow lay-initiative and to exercise any power of veto that he might have only in extreme cases. He is to develop lay-leadership. He is to read the signs of the times rather than being solely concerned with past accomplishments and understandings. He is to motivate the laity into mission.

According to Hughes, the Spiritual Director must be on guard against self-deception. He must encourage feedback from his close friends and others in order to have a clear picture of what he is about. The advice that he gives must be rooted and grounded on his own life experiences. He must encounter in himself the problems of self-deception--pride, inflated ego, and messianic complexes. These

things he can encounter in himself as well as others in the movement.

The author's questionnaire posed the following question in the area of qualities of a spiritual director: "What qualities and/or attitudes do you believe a Spiritual Director should have? (e.g. teaching, preaching, pastoral care, or other?)" The response categories are as follows: The area most often mentioned was that of pastoral counselor and confessor. Directors should have a sensitivity to where others are on their pilgrimage towards God. Directors must be loving people who want to be with those who come to them for counsel. Directors must discern the special needs of people and be good confessors. They must have the ability to listen to people and bring their concerns before God, then to be open to the Spirit for guidance in directing the lives of others.

The second most mentioned item in terms of qualities of a spiritual director notes that he should be an effective preacher and teacher. Perhaps this item was mentioned often because of the way the question was worded on the questionnaire. The third most mentioned item was that the priest should be an example of what he preaches and teaches as regards piety, study and action.

Other items mentioned were participation in a team approach, enabling laity in their ministry, giving advice in love, having a sense of humor, understanding the method of Cursillo, being open with one's shortcomings and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

F. The Excesses and Misuses

As with a movement of any kind, the most zealous members may

tend to be those who are in need of the most guidance. The tendency of zealots, in the judgment of the author, is that they tend to uphold a certain part of a movement while disregarding the entire method.

A person may feel that he has never been cared for as much as he had been on a Cursillo weekend and thereby become overwhelmed with the idea that Cursillo is just a place where one is "loved up."

Zealousness may also lead to cliquishness among the cursillistas. In any given parish, the cursillistas may gather together, share hugs and other forms of greeting, tend to stay together, and because of the love that they feel for each other, stay somewhat aloof, albeit unknowingly, from other parishioners. This causes suspicion in the minds of non-cursillistas and results in an ineffectual diocesan plan. Again, if the cursillistas were reminded of the method, they might be sensitive to their environments in their effort to "Christianize" them rather than simply being enamored with each other. After a tremendous discovery of the reality of God, some new cursillistas may adopt an attitude of superiority in the face of traditional religious practices.²⁷

Sometimes overflowing enthusiasm in cursillistas coming home from a weekend produces a disrespect for others outside the movement. The spiritual director must adopt a charitable attitude and help the cursillistas to see the dangers of presumption, of an imprudent and impulsive zeal. He can share the fact that "in my father's house there are many mansions." He can help them see that the road which

²⁷Hervas, The Leaders' Manual for Cursillos in Christianity, p. 171.

brought them to God may or may not be the same road which brings another person to God.

He will have to teach them to be understanding and patient with certain excusable, even though unjustified attitudes. The good shepherd who, perhaps, for a moment has abandoned the ninety-nine sheep in the fold, to go in search of the lost sheep, will know how to communicate his joy to his friends and acquaintances, so that all, united in charity, will rejoice at the recovery of the one who was lost.²⁸

Two questions were asked in this area on the questionnaire: "What are some of the major misuses and excesses that you have experienced in the movement? How do you deal with these misuses and excesses as Spritual Director?" The answers are as follows: The problem of exclusivity on the part of cursillistas is listed more often than any other problem Spiritual Directors have encountered around the country. It seems as if many cursillistas think of themselves as being "super-Christians" after having experienced the weekend. The antidote that is most often mentioned is continually reminding the Cursillo community of the method of the lay apostolate (Christianizing environments) and to have humility in the face of this task. Some dioceses do not have an effective "fourth day" program. This fact leads to an over emphasis of the weekend experience. Another problem is that Cursillo seems to have too many "secrets." Not everything that takes place on the weekend is explained ahead of time. Other problems and solutions mentioned are that there can be excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages by the staff; that there is sometimes a lack of realistic

²⁸ Hervas, The Priest and the Cursillos, p. 36

concern for serious emotional and personal problems of the team and candidates, with a limited view of healing when it is viewed as an instantaneous happening rather than a process; and the cursillistas need to be taught that the church exists not for its own members but for others.

Sensing the above problem areas, the Spiritual Director alerts the lay leaders who in turn might be the best communicators of the problems and of possible solutions. In this way, the Spiritual Director is developing lay leadership and natural leaders who are influencing the Cursillo environment.

G. The "ground of being" for Spiritual Directors

The Diocesan Spiritual Director in the Cursillo Movement is appointed by the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Director serves. He participates in the meetings of the Secretariat and represents the Bishop in all affairs concerning Cursillo in that region. Other priests are appointed by the Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Director to various positions within the local movement. Primarily these priests serve on the three-day weekends, at Ultreyas, and as members of the Secretariat.

What the author means by the "ground of being" is this: there is no life created, redeemed, sustained without the Grace of God. As proclaimed in the rollo on "Grace", God continually pours his Grace on his people. The spiritual director is one of God's people, linking his humanity to that of others. The spiritual director would not be created, redeemed, sustained without the Grace of God. He has no

"ground" to stand on except the Grace of God. The "ground of being" is God himself, the God whose primary attribute is Grace.

All priests, in the judgment of this writer, serve best when they are able to see themselves and operate within the brief framework described in the first paragraph of this chapter. The effective spiritual director ministers best out of his or her own humanity through the office into which he has been ordained.

Michael J. Buckley speaks of the identification of the priest in terms of his own human weakness before the God of all strength. He says that Christ himself became weak for our sake.

A body which was broken for us ... blood which was shed for us. He understands himself as a sacrificed self, effective only passing through his destruction, giving life and freedom only because he himself has moved through death and terror and achieved new life ... Thus it is the liability of Christ to suffering, his ability to be broken and shed, that makes his priesthood effective and his Eucharist possible ... The strength of our priesthood lies precisely in the weakness which seems to threaten it. The sensitivity and openness to discouragement and suffering are constitutive of the mystery of priesthood itself ... Weakness relates us profoundly with other people. It allows us to feel with them the human condition the human struggle and darkness and anguish which call out for salvation.²⁹

But spiritual directors are not called to be in relationship with only those they are called to serve, but they are called to be in relationship with God himself. The weakness found in the director's humanity, provides an arena in which the Grace of God can be seen, "in which his sustaining presence can reveal itself, in which even his power can become manifest."³⁰ The spiritual director must commit his

²⁹Michael J. Buckley, "Because Beset With Weakness," in To Be a Priest (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), pp. 127-128.

³⁰Ibid., p. 128.

life to God and trust his Grace. God uses the office of priest to minister his graces, but the priest should not depend on that power alone. Self-assurance and pride in the office of a priest might prove to be a stumbling block more than a means of grace. The corrective seems to be to rejoice not only in the office, but to rejoice that our "names are written in heaven." "And 'Written in heaven' means written in spite of what is written against you in the records of your life."³¹

Tillich states that sometimes the rites and ceremonies of the Church can stand in the way of the most precious thing which is offered in Christianity. The most precious thing is a New Creation or a New Being. He quotes St. Paul in the Second Letter to the Corinthians: "If anyone is in union with Christ he is a new being; the old state of things has passed away; there is a new state of things." "Christianity is the message of the new Creation, the New Being, the New Reality which appeared with the appearance of Jesus."³²

Jesus is the bearer of the grace of God upon which the spiritual director bases his ministry and spiritual direction. The acceptance of Grace of God is the sole basis for one's life and direction. This Grace comes through God's Son Jesus. Men and women, including Spiritual Directors, become New Creations and in turn ministers of his Grace.

The questionnaire made the following inquiry: "What Spiritual

³¹Paul Tillich, "Heal the Sick...Cast Out Demons", in his History of Christian Thought (Providence: 1956), p. 271.

³²Paul Tillich, The New Being (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), p. 15.

Direction do you seek in order to be more effective as a spiritual director?" The variety of answers received are helpful to the author as means to seeking that "ground of being" described above and are grouped under three categories.

1. Under the category of Piety, the Spiritual Director is to seek the guidance of the bishop, participate in a clergy support group, follow a rule of life which is adjusted from time to time with a confessor, seek a life grounded in prayer and centered in the altar, seek prayer time with the weekend team and the secretariat, maintain communication with God through prayer and communication with all those connected with Cursillo in the diocese, have consistent contact with other Spiritual Directors, and make regular retreats.

2. In terms of study, the respondents call for reading in the works of the saints, having a better knowledge of Cursillo materials, and participating in a program of Bible reading;

3. Spiritual Directors are to find ways to grow in the ability to relate to people; have loving concern for those with whom you come into contact; have a better and fuller knowledge of the candidates.

The author is appreciative of these suggestions as methods of making contact with the "ground of being." The author's own direction as found in the Proposed Book of Common Prayer, visiting a spiritual advisor in time of need, participating in an ongoing Group Reunion, being regular in attendance at Ultreyas, and celebrating the Holy Eucharist on Sundays and Wednesdays.

H. Conclusion

The Spiritual Director is primarily a catalyst who helps to keep the eyes of the lay leaders on the entire Cursillo Method. The excellent benefits derived from the Cursillo Movement will not be apparent unless the structure as outlined in The Leaders' Manual for Cursillos in Christianity, The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement, and The Spiritual Director's Manual are basically followed. In the author's experience, lay leaders and other cursillistas do look to the Spiritual Director for guidelines and direction.

If the Spiritual Director shares his humanity with the laity and other Spiritual Directors, and if his priesthood is one that respects others and gently cares for human souls, his insistence on following the method as closely as possible will not go entirely unheeded.

The Cursillo Method is a beautiful method of renewal and direction for doing God's work with others. That work entails making Christ the primary focal point of every environment. The Spiritual Director is called to model this direction by being part of an ongoing group reunion, attending and participating in ultreyas, seeking spiritual direction, and adhering to a diocesan plan.

The Spiritual Director must also seek to become more and more literate and articulate in the literature and nuances of the movement so that he may communicate to others a mature picture of the true nature of the Cursillo Method. It is more than a weekend.

As has been suggested by some of the respondents to the

questionnaire, it would be well if the Spiritual Director were well-skilled in understanding the dynamics of groups of people in order to be a better listener and advisor to not only groups, but individuals as well.

The priest is an axis point only to the degree that he affirms and upbuilds the lay leaders. He is charged to call out in others a renewal of their ministry given at Baptism. This calling out takes place through close friendship with the lay leaders, through delegation of responsibility to them, by praying with them, and encouraging them to participate in a Leaders' School.

The laity, on the other hand, have a great wealth of knowledge and experience to share with the Spiritual Director. A prime example for Anglicans is C. S. Lewis, the famous Oxford Don who died within the lifetime of this author, and whose works continue to speak to a vast number of Christians.

Above and beyond all else, a Spiritual Director of the Cursillo Movement is called to proclaim and live the Grace of God in his own life. He is called to let God's loving power shine through his own weakness. As Christ was broken for all humankind, so must the brokenness of the Spiritual Director be a sign of God's great love which is graciously shared with all people.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What do you see the job description of the Spiritual Director as including? (pre and post cursillo, weekend, and diocesan director)
2. What spiritual direction do you seek in order to be more effective as a spiritual director?
3. In what way do you see the clergy and the laity working together (ideally and actually)?
4. How does your local cursillo community fit into an over-all plan that your bishop may have for your diocese?
5. What are some of the major misuses and excesses that you have experienced in the movement? - How do you deal with these misuses and excesses as Spiritual Director?
6. What qualities and/or attitudes do you believe a Spiritual Director should have? (e.g. teaching, preaching, pastoral care, or other)?
7. Where does the Spiritual Director fit into the over-all goal of Cursillo: i.e. transforming leaders into committed Christians for the purpose of transforming the world for Christ?
8. What is your background in the Cursillo Movement? What positions are you currently fulfilling?

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